AUNT JO'S SCRAP-BAG

LOUISA·M·ALCOTT

Marilyn Spencer

from Aunt Lucie

Sitting so, neither heard a step come softly over the sand

AUNT JO'S SCRAP-BAG

BY

LOUISA M. ALCOTT

Author of "Little Women," etc.

Complete Authorized Edition

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By Louisa M. Alcott

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FOREWORD

SEVENTY-FIVE years ago a vivacious, excited young girl of twenty placed among her mother's Christmas gifts her first book. To it was fastened this note: "Into your Christmas stocking I put my 'first born', knowing you will accept it with all its faults (for grandmothers are always kind), and look upon it merely as an earnest of what I may yet do; for with so much to cheer me on, I hope to pass in time from fairies and fables to men and realities." This little volume, called "Flower Fables", was a collection of stories told by Louisa May Alcott to her little friend, Ellen, the daughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Although it brought her but thirty-two dollars, the book turned the attention of a busy, surprised world to this promising young New England author. Within a short time she could truthfully say: "I often think, as I go larking around, independent, with more work than I can do and half a dozen publishers asking for tales, of the old times when I went meekly from door to door peddling my first poor little stories and feeling so rich with ten dollars."

The promise of the Christmas note was, however, to be fulfilled even more brilliantly. In 1867 appears this entry in Miss Alcott's diary: "Niles, partner of Roberts, asked me to write a girls' book. Said I'd try. F. asked me to be editor of Merry's Museum. Said I'd try. Began at once on both new jobs, but didn't like either." In spite of the enthusiastic support and interest of her devoted family the book progressed slowly, due, no doubt, to the fact, that: "I never liked girls, or knew many, excepting my sisters; but our queer plays and experiences may prove interesting though I doubt it." This story, christened "Little Women", when first published in July, 1868, concluded with the exciting announcement of Meg's engagement. A year later; due to its tremendous success, the second part was written. Even Miss Alcott herself said of the story: "It reads better than I expected. . . . We really lived most of it, and if it succeeds, that will be the reason of it."

With the publication of "Little Women" the fame of Louisa May Alcott was assured, and at once she stepped into the front line of literary writers of the day. Shy, modest, retiring, thinking of others rather than herself, she determined to answer the constant stream of letters from girls all over the country and her publishers by writing

more stories of the same sort. "An Old-Fashioned Girl" followed next; then "Little Men", "Under the Lilacs" and others; then just before her death "Jo's Boys" was finished. Popular as these later stories have been, they have not achieved the success of the immortal story of Jo, Beth, Meg, and Amy. "Little Women" is indeed the author's masterpiece, and even if sixty years have come and gone since its publication, girls, and some boys, revel in this fine tale, for in simplicity, truth, humor and pathos it has never been rivalled. No matter whether the young reader be German, Norwegian, French or Dutch, the story is enjoyed with equal pleasure, for the struggles the March family met with such proud spirits and courageous hearts are duplicated the world over.

Encouraged over the reception given the first stories, Miss Alcott in 1871 decided to gather together her shorter tales and to publish them under the title of "Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag." The first volume of the series, called "My Boys", contained not only the charming sketch of the little Breton girl, "Little Marie of Lehon", but also the fine portraits of two boys, one the American "A", and the other the foreign lad, Ladislas Wisniewski, who were the models for the ever delightful and refreshing "Laurie."

During the next ten years five other volumes followed, one the sketch of the author's amusing pilgrimage abroad, others the fruit of her fanciful imagination and reminiscences of her own family. One story especially, "A Happy Birthday", tells of the celebration of Mrs. Alcott's seventy-third birthday, and brought from the publishers fifty dollars, which was used in providing daily rides for the beloved "Marmee", slowly recovering from a serious illness. "Jimmy's Cruise on the Pinafore" was written as the result of seeing a merry group of Boston children act in that famous operetta. The last volume, which begins with the famous account of "An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving", was completed just five years before the author's death, when ill-health and family cares were her constant companions.

The tremendous popularity of the longer stories has quite overshadowed these shorter tales, so thoroughly enjoyed by the boys and girls of a generation ago. Times and ideas, as well as fashions, have changed greatly since Civil War days, and although some of the stories are slight and insignificant, others are bright and colorful, shining clearly through all these years. It has been the pleasant task of the editor to sort out these gay bits from the roomy "scrap-bag", and show them to others in this new

dress. It is earnestly hoped that boys and girls of to-day will read with renewed pleasure and interest this less known work of this pioneer American author for children, who was able to write so understandingly and so well of them and their pleasures, and in so doing revealed a fine portrait of a noble woman.

H. M.

Christmas Holidays, 1928–1929
Cleveland, Ohio

PREFACE

As grandmothers rummage their piece-bags and bundles in search of gay odds and ends with which to fill the little stockings that hang all in a row on Christmas Eve, so I have gathered together some stories, old and new, to amuse the large family that has so rapidly and beautifully grown up about me.

I hope that when they promenade in nightcaps and gowns to rifle the plump stockings, the little "dears" will utter an "Oh!" of pleasure, and give a prance of satisfaction, as they pull out this small gift from Aunt Jo's scrap-bag.

Christmas Holidays
1871–1872

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JIMMY'S CRUISE IN THE PINAFORE

HOW HE SHIPPED

A BOY sat on a doorstep in a despondent attitude, with his eyes fixed on a pair of very shabby shoes and his elbows resting on his knees, as if to hide the big patches there. But it was not the fact that his toes were nearly out and his clothes dilapidated which brought the wrinkles to his forehead and the tears to his eyes, for he was used to that state of things and bore it without complaint. The prospect was a dull one for a lively lad full of the spring longings which sunny April weather always brings. But it was not the narrow back street, where noisy children played and two or three dusty trees tried to bud without sunshine, that made him look so dismal. Nor was it the knowledge that a pile of vests was nearly ready for him to trudge away with before he could really rest after doing many errands to save Mother's weary feet.

No, it was a burden that lay very heavily on his heart and made it impossible to even whistle as he waited. Above the sounds that filled the street he heard a patient moan from the room within; and

no matter what object his eyes rested on, he saw with sorrowful distinctness a small white face turned wistfully toward the window, as if weary of the pillow where it had lain so long.

Merry little Kitty, who used to sing and dance from morning till night, was now so feeble and wasted that he could carry her about like a baby. All day she lay moaning softly, and her one comfort was when "brother" could come and sing to her. That night he could not sing, his heart was so full, because the doctor had said that the poor child must have country air as soon as possible, else she never would recover from the fever which left her such a sad little ghost of her former self. But, alas, there was no money for the trip, and Mother was sewing day and night to earn enough for a week at least of blessed country air and quiet. Jimmy did his best to help, but could find very little to do, and the pennies came in so slowly he was almost in despair.

There was no father to lend a strong hand, and Mrs. Nelson was one of the "silent poor" who cannot ask for charity, no matter how much they may need it. The twelve-year-old boy considered himself the man of the family, and manfully carried as many burdens as his young shoulders would bear; but this was a very heavy one, so it is no wonder

that he looked sober. Holding his curly head in his hands, as if to keep it from flying asunder with the various plans working inside, he sat staring at the dusty bricks in a desperate frame of mind.

Warm days were coming, and every hour was precious, for poor Kitty pined in the close room, and all he could do was to bring her dandelions and bits of green grass from the Common when she begged to go in the fields and pick "pretties" for herself. He loved the little sister dearly, and as he remembered her longing, his eyes filled, and he doubled up both fists with an air of determination, muttering to himself:

"She *shall* go! I don't see any other way, and I'll do it!"

The plan which had been uppermost lately was this. His father had been a sailor, and Jimmy proposed to run away to sea as cabin boy. His wages were to be paid before he went, so mother and Kitty could be in the country while he was gone, and in a few months he would come sailing gayly home to find the child her rosy self again. A very boyish and impossible plan, but he meant it and was in just the mood to carry it out — for every other attempt to make money had failed.

"I'll do it as sure as my name is Jim Nelson.

I'll take a look at the ships this very night, and go in the first one that will have me," he said, with a resolute nod of the head, though his heart sank within him at the thought. "I wonder which kind of captains pay boys best? I guess I'll try a steamer; they make short trips. I heard the cannon to-day, so one is in, and I'll try for a place before I go to bed."

Little did desperate Jimmy guess what ship he would really sail in, or what a prosperous voyage he was about to make; for help was coming that very minute, as it generally does, sooner or later, to generous people who are very much in earnest.

First a shrill whistle was heard, at the sound of which he looked up quickly; then a rosy-faced girl of about his own age came skipping down the street, swinging her hat by one string; and, as Jimmy watched her approach, a smile began to soften the grim look he wore, for Willy Bryant was his best friend and neighbor, being full of courage, fun, and kindness. He nodded, and made room for her on the step — the place she usually occupied at spare moments when they studied their lessons and recounted their scrapes to each other.

But to-night Willy seemed possessed of some unusually good piece of news which she chose to tell in her own lively fashion, for, instead of sitting

down, she began to dance a sailor's hornpipe, singing gayly, "I'm little Buttercup, sweet little Buttercup," till her breath gave out.

"What makes you so jolly, Will?" asked Jimmy as she dropped down beside him and fanned herself with the ill-used hat.

"Such fun — you'll never guess — just what we

wanted — if your mother only will! You'll dance, too, when you know," panted the girl, smiling like a substantial sort of fairy come to bring good luck.

"Fire away, then. It will have to be extra nice to set me off. I don't feel a bit like jigs now," answered Jimmy, as the gloom obscured his face again, like a cloud over the sun.

"You know 'Pinafore'?" began Will, and getting a quick nod for an answer, she poured forth the following tale with great rapidity: "Well, some folks are going to get it up with children to do it, and they want any boys and girls that can sing to go and be looked at to-morrow, and the good ones will be picked out, and dressed up, and taught how to act, and have the nicest time that ever was. Some of our girls are going, and so am I, and you sing and must come, too, and have some fun. Won't it be jolly?"

"I guess it would; but I can't. Mother needs me every minute out of school," began Jimmy, with a shake of the head, having made up his mind some time ago that he must learn to do without fun.

"But we shall be paid for it," cried Will, clapping her hands with the double delight of telling the best part of her story and seeing Jimmy's sober face clear suddenly as if the sun had burst forth with great brilliancy.

"Really? How much? Can I sing well enough?" and he clutched her arm excitedly, for this unexpected ray of hope dazzled him.

"Some of them will have ten dollars a week, and some more — the real nice ones, like Lee, the singing boy, who is a wonder," answered Will, in the tone of one well informed on such points.

"Ten dollars!" gasped Jimmy, for the immensity of the sum took his breath away. "Could *I* get that? How long? Where do we go? Do they really want us fellows? Are you sure it's all true?"

"It was all in the paper, and Miss Pym, the teacher who boards at our house, told Mother about it. The folks advertised for school children, sixty of them, and will really pay; and Mother said I could go and try, and all the money I get I'm going to put in a bank and have for my own. Don't you believe me now?"

Miss Pym and the newspapers settled the matter in Jimmy's mind and made him more anxious than before about the other point.

"Do you think *I* would have any chance?" he asked, still holding Will, who seemed inclined to dance.

"I know you would. Don't you do splendidly at school? And didn't they want you for a choir boy, only your mother couldn't spare you?" answered

Will, decidedly; for Jimmy did love music, and had a sweet little pipe of his own, as she well knew.

"Mother will have to spare me now, if they pay like that. I can work all day and do without sleep to earn money this way. Oh, Will, I'm so glad you came, for I was just ready to run away to sea. There didn't seem anything else to do," whispered Jimmy in a choky sort of tone, as hopes and fears struggled together in his boyish mind.

"Run as fast as you like, and I'll go, too. We'll sail in the 'Pinafore', and come home with our pockets full of money.

" 'Sing, hey, the merry maiden and the tar!' "

burst out Will, who was so full of spirits she could not keep still another minute.

Jimmy joined in, and the fresh voices echoed through the street so pleasantly that Mrs. Peters stopped scolding her six squabbling children, while Kitty's moaning changed to a feeble little sound of satisfaction, for "brother's" lullabies were her chief comfort and delight.

"We shall lose school, you know, for we act in the afternoon, not the evening. I don't care; but you will, you like to study so well. Miss Pym didn't

like it at first, but Mother said it would help the poor people and a little fun wouldn't hurt the children. I thought of you right away, and if you don't get as much money as I do, you shall have some of mine, so Kitty can go away soon."

Will's merry face grew very sweet and kind as she said that, and Jimmy was glad his mother called him just then, because he did not know how to thank this friend in need. When he came out with the parcel of vests, he looked like a different boy, for Mrs. Nelson had told him to go and find out all about it and had seemed as much dazzled by the prospect as he did, sewing was such a weary work.

Their interview with Miss Pym was a most encouraging one, and it was soon settled that Jimmy should go with Will to try for a place on the morrow.

"And I'll get it, too!" he said to himself, as he kissed Kitty's thin cheek, full of the sweet hope that he might be the means of bringing back life and color to the little face he loved so well.

He was so excited he could not sleep, and beguiled the long hours by humming under his breath all the airs he knew belonging to the already popular opera. Next morning he flew about his work as if for a wager, and when Will came for him, there was not

a happier heart in all the city than the hopeful one that thumped under Jimmy's threadbare best jacket.

Such a crowd of girls and boys as they found at the hall where they were told to apply for inspection! Such a chirping and piping went on there, it sounded like a big cage full of larks and linnets! And by and by, when the trial was over, such a smiling troop of children as was left to be drilled by the energetic gentlemen who had the matter in hand! Among this happy band stood our Jimmy, chosen for his good voice, and Will, because of her bright face and lively, self-possessed manners. They could hardly wait to be dismissed, and it was a race home to see who should be first to tell the good news. Jimmy tried to be quiet on Kitty's account, but failed entirely; and it was a pleasant sight to see the boy run into his mother's arms, crying joyfully:

"I'm in! I'm in! Ten dollars a week! Hurrah!"

"I can hardly believe it!" And weary Mrs. Nelson dropped her needle to indulge in a few moments of delightful repose.

"If it goes well, they may want us for a month or six weeks, the man said. Just think, maybe I'll get fifty or sixty dollars! And Baby will get well right

off," cried Jimmy, in an arithmetical sort of rapture, as he leaned above Kitty, who tried to clap her little hands without quite knowing what the joy was all about.

HOW HE SAILED

After that day Jimmy led a very happy life, for he loved music and enjoyed the daily drill with his mates, though it was long before he saw the inside of the theatre. Will knew a good deal about it, for an actor's family had boarded with her mother, and the little girl had been behind the scenes. But to Jimmy, who had only seen one fairy play, all was very strange when at last he went upon the stage; for the glittering world he expected was gone, and all was dusty, dark, and queer, with trapdoors underfoot, machinery overhead, and a wilderness of scenery jumbled together in the drollest way. He was all eyes and ears and enjoyed himself immensely as he came and went, sung and acted, with the troop of lads who made up the sailor chorus. It was a real ship to him, in spite of painted cannon, shaky masts, and cabin doors that led nowhere. He longed to run up the rigging; but as that was forbidden, for fear of danger, he contented himself by obeying orders with nautical obedience, singing

with all his might, and taking great satisfaction in his blue suit with the magical letters "H. M. S. Pinafore" round his cap.

Day by day all grew more and more interesting. His mother was never tired of hearing his adventures; he sung Kitty to sleep with the new songs; and the neighbors took such a friendly interest in his success that they called him Lord Nelson and predicted that he would be as famous as his great namesake.

When the grand day came at last and the crew of jolly young tars stood ready to burst forth with the opening chorus,

> "We sail the ocean blue,
> Our saucy ship's a beauty,
> We're gallant men and true,
> And bound to do our duty!"

Jimmy hardly knew whether he stood on his head or his heels at first, for, in spite of many rehearsals, everything seemed changed. Instead of daylight, gas shone everywhere; the empty seats were full; the orchestra was playing splendidly; and when the curtain rose, a sea of friendly faces welcomed them, and the pleasant sound of applause made the hearts under the blue jackets dance gayly.

How those boys did sing! How their eyes shone and their feet kept time to the familiar strains! With what a relish they hitched up their trousers and lurched about, or saluted and cheered as the play demanded! With what interest they watched the microscopic midshipmite, listened to Rafe as his sweet voice melodiously told the story of his hapless love, and smiled on pretty Josephine, who was a regular bluebird without the scream!

"Isn't this fun?" whispered Jimmy's next neighbor, taking advantage of a general burst of laughter, as the inimitable little bumboat woman advertised her wares with captivating drollery.

"Right down jolly!" answered Jimmy, feeling that a series of somersaults across the stage would be an immense relief to the pent-up emotions of his boyish soul. For under all the natural excitement of the hour deep down lay the sweet certainty that he was earning health for Kitty, and it made his heart sing for joy more blithely than any jovial chorus to which he lent his happy voice.

But his bliss was not complete till the stately Sir Joseph, K. C. B., had come aboard, followed by "his sisters and his cousins and his aunts"; for among that flock of devoted relatives in white muslin and gay ribbons was Will. Standing in the front

row, her bright face was good to see, for her black eyes sparkled, every hair on her head curled its best, her cherry bows streamed in the breeze, and her feet pranced irresistibly at the lively parts of the music. She longed to dance the hornpipe which the little Quaker aunt did so capitally, but, being denied that honor, distinguished herself by the comic vigor with which she "polished up the handle of the big front door" and did the other "business" recorded by the gallant "ruler of the Queen's Navee."

She and Jimmy nodded to each other behind the Admiral's august back, and while Captain Corcoran was singing to the moon and Buttercup suffering the pangs of "wemorse," the young people had a gay time behind the scenes. Jimmy and Will sat upon a green baize bank to compare notes, while the relatives flew about like butterflies and the sailors talked baseball, jackknives, and other congenial topics, when not envying Sir Joseph his cocked hat and the Captain his epaulettes.

It was a very successful launch, and the merry little crew set sail with a fair wind and every prospect of a prosperous voyage. When the first performance was over, our two children left their fine feathers behind them, like Cinderella when the

magic hour struck, and went gayly home, feeling much elated, for they knew they should go back to fresh triumphs and were earning money by their voices like Jenny Lind and Mario. How they pitied other boys and girls who could not go in at that mysterious little door! How important they felt as parts of the spectacle about which every one was talking! And what millionaires they considered themselves as they discussed their earnings and planned what to do with the prospective fortunes!

That was the beginning of many busy, happy weeks for both the children — weeks which they long remembered with great pleasure, as did older and wiser people; for that merry, innocent little opera proved that theatres can be made the scenes of harmless amusement and opened to a certain class of young people a new and profitable field for their talents. So popular did this small company become that the piece went on through the summer vacation and was played in the morning as well as afternoon to satisfy the crowds who wished to see and hear it.

Never had the dear old Boston Museum, which so many of us have loved and haunted for years, seen such a pretty sight as one of those morning performances. It was the perfection of harmless

merrymaking, and the audience was as pleasant a spectacle as that upon the stage. Fathers and mothers stole an hour from their busy lives to come and be children with their children, irresistibly attracted and charmed by the innocent fun, the gay music that bewitched the ear, one could hardly tell why, and the artless acting of those who are always playing parts, whether the nursery or the theatre is their stage.

The windows stood open, and sunshine and fresh air came in to join the revel. Babies crowed and prattled; mammas chatted together; old people found they had not forgotten how to laugh; and boys and girls rejoiced over the discovery of a new delight for holidays. It was good to be there, and in spite of all the discussion in papers and parlors, no harm came to the young mariners, but much careful training of various sorts and well-earned wages that went into pockets which sorely needed a silver lining.

HOW THE VOYAGE ENDED

So the good ship "Pinafore" sailed and sailed for many prosperous weeks, and when at last she came into port and dropped anchor for the season, she was received with a salute of general approbation for

the successful engagement out of which she came with her flags flying and not one of her gallant crew killed or wounded. Well pleased with their share of the glory, officers and men went ashore to spend their prize money with true sailor generosity, all eager to ship again for another cruise in the autumn.

But long before that time Able Seaman James Nelson had sent his family into the country, mother begging Will to take good care of her dear boy till he could join them and Kitty throwing kisses as she smiled good-by, with cheeks already the rosier for the comforts "brother" had earned for her. Jimmy would not desert his ship while she floated, but managed to spend his Sundays out of town, often taking Will with him as first mate; and thanks to her lively tongue, friends were soon made for the newcomers. Mrs. Nelson found plenty of sewing; Kitty grew strong and well in the fine air; and the farmer with whom they lived, seeing what a handy lad the boy was, offered him work and wages for the autumn, so all could be independent and together. With this comfortable prospect before him, Jimmy sang away like a contented blackbird, never tiring of his duty, for he was a general favorite, and Kitty literally strewed his way with flowers gathered by her own grateful little hands.

When the last day came, he was in such spirits that he was found doing double shuffles in corners, hugging the midshipmite, who was a little girl of about Kitty's age, and treating his messmates to peanuts with a lavish hand. Will had her hornpipe, also, when the curtain was down, kissed every one of the other "sisters, cousins, and aunts," and joined lustily in the rousing farewell cheers given by the crew.

A few hours later, a cheerful-looking boy might have been seen trudging toward one of the railway stations. A new hat, brave in blue streamers, was on his head; a red balloon struggled to escape from one hand; a shabby carpetbag, stuffed full, was in the other; and a pair of shiny shoes creaked briskly, as if the feet inside were going on a very pleasant errand.

About this young traveller, who walked with a sailor-like roll and lurch, revolved a little girl, chattering like a magpie and occasionally breaking into song, as if she couldn't help it.

"Be sure you come next Saturday; it won't be half such fun if you don't go halves," said the boy, beaming at her as he hauled down the impatient balloon, which seemed inclined to break from its moorings.

" 'Yes, I know
That is so!' "

hummed the girl with a skip to starboard, that she might bear a hand with the bag. "Keep some cherries for me, and don't forget to give Kit the doll I dressed for her."

"I shouldn't have been going myself if it hadn't been for you, Will. I never shall forget that," said Jimmy, whom intense satisfaction rendered rather more sedate than his friend.

"Running away to sea is great fun,

'With a tar that ploughs the water!' "

sung Will in spite of herself.

" 'And a gallant captain's daughter,' "

echoed Jimmy, smiling across the carpetbag. Then both joined in an irrepressible chorus of "Dash it! Dash it!" as a big man nearly upset them and a dog barked madly at the balloon.

Being safely landed in the train, Jimmy hung out of the window till the last minute, discussing his new prospects with Will, who stood on tiptoe outside, bubbling over with fun.

"I'll teach you to make butter and cheese, and you shall be my dairywoman, for I mean to be a farmer," he said, just as the bell rang.

"All right, I'd like that ever so much." And then the irrepressible madcap burst out, to the great amusement of the passengers:

" 'For you might have been a Roosian,
A Frenchman, Turk or Proosian,
Or an Ital-i-an.' "

And Jimmy could not resist shouting back, as the train began to move:

" 'But in spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
I'm an Amer-i-can.' "

Then he subsided, to think over the happy holiday before him and the rich cargo of comfort, independence, and pleasure he had brought home from his successful cruise in the "Pinafore."

THE DOLLS' JOURNEY FROM MINNESOTA TO MAINE

MR. PLUM lived in St. Paul, Minnesota, U. S. A. There were six little Plums, all girls, varying in ages from fourteen to seven, and named Kate, Lucy, Susy, Lizzy, Marjory, and Maggie. There was no mamma, but Mrs. Gibbs, the housekeeper, was a kind old soul, and papa did everything he could to make the small daughters good and happy.

One stormy Saturday afternoon the children were all together in the schoolroom and papa busy at his desk in the library, with the door open because he liked to hear the pleasant voices and catch glimpses of the droll plays that went on there.

Kate lay on the sofa reading "The Daisy Chain" for the fourth time. Susy, Lucy, and Lizzie were having a select tea party in their own recess, the entrance to which was barricaded with chairs to keep out the "babies", as they called the little ones, who were much offended at being excluded and sat up in the cushioned window seat pensively watching the rain.

"If it had only waited until to-morrow, we should

have had time for our journey; now we can't go till next Saturday. Flora is so disappointed she would cry if I had not taught her to behave," said Maggie with a sigh, as she surveyed the doll on her knee in its new summer suit.

"So is Dora. Just see how sweet she looks with her hat and cape on and her travelling bag all ready. Couldn't we play travel in the house? It is such a pity to wait when the children are in such a hurry to go," answered Marjory, settling the tiny bag that held Dora's nightcap and gown as well as the morsels of cake that were to serve for her lunch.

"No," said Maggie decidedly, "we can't do it, because there is no room for carriages, and boats, and railroads, and hotels, and accidents. It is a long journey from Minnesota to Maine, and we couldn't get it all into one room I'm sure."

"I don't think papa would mind our coming into the library, if we didn't ring the car bells very loud or scream much when the accidents happen," said Marjory, who hated to give up the plan they had been cherishing all the week.

"What is it, little ones? Come and tell me what is the matter," called Mr. Plum, hearing his name and the magic word "railroad", for he was the president of one and had his hands full just then.

Down jumped the little girls and ran to perch on either arm of his chair, pouring out their small tribulations as freely as if he had been the most sympathizing of mothers.

"We planned to take a long, long journey round the garden with our dolls to-day, and play go to Maine and see Aunt Maria. You know she asked us, and we looked up the way on the map and got all ready, and now it rains and we are dreadfully disappointed," said Maggie, while Marjory sighed as she looked at the red D. worked on the inch-square travelling bag.

"As you can't go, why not send the dolls to make aunty a visit, and she will send them back when they get homesick," proposed Mr. Plum, smiling, as if a sudden idea had popped into his head.

"Really?" cried Maggie.

"How could we?" asked Marjory.

"They could go and come by mail, and tell you all about their adventures when they got back," said papa.

Both children were speechless for a moment; then as the full splendor of this proposition dawned upon them, they clapped their hands, crying eagerly:

"We will! We will! Let's do it at once."

"What? Where? Who?" asked Susy, Lucy, and

Lizzie, forgetting their tea party to run and see what was going on.

They were told, and in their turn exclaimed so loudly that Kate came to join in the fun.

After a great deal of talking and laughing, the dolls were prepared for the long journey. They were common wooden-headed dollies, a hand long, with stuffed bodies and stout legs ornamented with very small feet in red and blue boots. Dora was a blonde and Flora a brunette; otherwise they were just alike and nearly new. Usually when people go travelling, they put on their hats and cloaks, but these pilgrims, by papa's advice, left all encumbrances behind them, for they were to travel in a peculiar way, and blue gingham dresses were chosen for the expedition.

"It is possible that they may never come back. Accidents will happen, you know. Are you prepared for that?" asked Mr. Plum, pausing with the brown paper spread out before him.

"I am," answered Maggie firmly, as she laid Flora on the table, her black eyes staring as if rather alarmed at this sudden start.

Marjory hesitated a moment, clasping Dora to her bosom with a face full of maternal anxiety. But Susy, Lucy, and Lizzie cried: "Let her go; do let

her go, and if she is lost, papa will give you a new doll."

"Good-by, my darling dear. Have a splendid time, and be sure you come back to me," whispered Marjory, with a tender farewell kiss as she gave up her child.

All stood watching silently while papa tied the dolls back to back with the ribbon Kate pulled from her neck, then folded them carefully in strong brown paper, leaving their heads out that they might see the world as they went along. Being carefully fastened up with several turns of cord, Mr. Plum directed the precious parcel to "Miss Maria Plum, Portland, Maine. With care." Then it was weighed, stamped, and pronounced ready for the post.

"I shall write and tell aunty they are coming, because she will want to be prepared for such distinguished visitors," said papa, taking up his pen with a glance at the six excited little faces round him.

Silence reigned while the letter was written, and as he sealed it up, Mr. Plum said solemnly, with his hand on the parcel:

"For the last time, shall they go?"

"Yes!" answered the Spartan mothers with one

voice, while the other sisters danced round them, and Kate patted the curly heads approvingly.

"Going, going, gone!" answered papa as he whisked on his coat and hat and slammed the door behind him.

The children clustered at the window to see him set out on this momentous errand, and he often looked back waving his umbrella at them, till he vanished round the corner, with a reassuring pat on the pocket out of which dear Do and Flo popped their heads for a last look at their sweet home.

"Now let us take out poor old Lucinda and Rose Augusta to play with. I know their feelings were hurt at our leaving them for the new dolls," said Maggie, rummaging in the baby house, whither Margery soon followed her to reinstate the old darlings in the place of the departed new ones.

"Safely off," reported Mr. Plum, when he came in to tea, "and we may expect to hear from them in a week or two. Parcels go more slowly than letters, and this is Aunty's busy season, so wait patiently and see what will happen."

"We will," said the little girls; and they did, but week after week went by and nothing was heard of the wanderers.

We, however, can follow them and learn much that their anxious mothers never knew.

As soon as Flora and Dora recovered from the bewilderment occasioned by the confusion of the post office, they found themselves in one of the many leathern mail bags rumbling eastward. As it was perfectly dark, they could not see their companions, so listened to the whispering and rustling that went on about them. The newspapers all talked politics, and some of them used such bad language that the dolls would have covered their ears if their hands had not been tied down. The letters were better behaved and more interesting, for they told one another the news they carried, because nothing is private in America, and even gummed envelopes cannot keep gossip from leaking out.

"It is very interesting, but I should enjoy it more if I was not grinding my nose against the rough side of this leather bag," whispered Dora, who lay undermost just then.

"So should I, if a heavy book was not pinching my toes. I've tried to kick it away, but it won't stir and keeps droning on about reports and tariffs and such dull things," answered Flora, with a groan.

"Do you like travelling?" asked Dora, presently,

when the letters and papers fell asleep, lulled by the motion of the cars.

"Not yet, but I shall when I can look about me. This bundle near by says the mails are often sorted in the cars, and in that way we shall see something of the world, I hope," answered Flora, cheering up, for, like her mamma, she was of an enquiring turn.

The dolls took a nap of some hours and were roused by a general tumbling out on a long shelf, where many other parcels lay, and lively men sent letters and papers flying here and there as if a whirlwind was blowing. A long box lay beside the dolls who stood nearly erect leaning against a pile of papers. Several holes were cut in the lid, and out of one of them was thrust a little black nose, as if trying to get air.

"Dear me! What can be in it;" said Flora, who was nearest.

"I'm a poor little alligator, going to a boy in Chicago, if you please, and I want my mother," sobbed a voice from the box, and there was a rap on the lid as of an agitated tail.

"Mercy on us! I hope we shall not have to travel with the monster," whispered Dora, trying to see over her shoulder.

"I'm not afraid. He can't be very dreadful, for

the box is not any longer than we are. Natural history is very useful; I've heard mamma say so, and I shall talk with him while we rest here," answered Flo, nodding toward the eye which now took the place of the nose.

So the little alligator told her something of his home on the banks of a great river, where he was just learning to play happily with his brothers and sisters, when he was caught and sent away to pine in captivity.

The dolls comforted him as well as they could, and a pair of baby's shoes travelling in an envelope sympathized with him, while a shabby bundle directed to "Michael Dolan, at Mrs. Judy Quinn's, next door to Mr. Pat Murphy, Boston, North Street," told them to "Whisht and slape quite till they came forninst the place."

"Such low people!" whispered Do to Flo, and both stood primly silent till they were tumbled into another mail bag and went rattling on again with a new set of companions.

"I hope that poor baby will go safely and the boy be good to him," said Flora, for the little alligator went with the live stock in some other way.

"Thank goodness he didn't go with us! I shall dream about that black nose and winking eye, I'm

sure. The dangers of travelling are great, but we are safe and comfortable now, I think," and Dora settled down in a cozy corner of the bag, wondering when they should reach Chicago.

"I like adventures and hope we shall have some," answered Flora, briskly, little dreaming how soon her wish was to be granted.

A few hours later there came a great bump, a crash, a cry, and then all the mail bags rolled one over the other with the car down a steep embankment into a river.

"Now we are dead!" shrieked the poor dolls, clinging together as they heard the splash of water, the shouting of men, the splintering of wood, and the hiss of steam.

"Don't be frightened, ladies; mail bags are always looked after," said a large envelope with an official seal and the name of a Senator on it.

"Any bones broken, dear madam?" asked a jaunty pink letter, with a scent of musk about it, evidently a love letter.

"I think one foot is hurt, and my clothes are dripping," sighed Dora, faintly.

"Water won't hurt calico," called out a magazine full of fashion plates, adding dolefully, as its gay colors began to run, "I shall be in a nice mess if I

ever get out of this. People will wear odd fashions if they follow me this time."

"Hope they will telegraph news of this accident in time for the evening papers," said a dingy sheet called the *Barahoo Thunderbolt*, as it lay atop of the heap in its yellow wrapper.

"Be calm, my friends, and wait with fortitude for death or deliverance, as I do." With which philosophic remark *The St. Louis Cosmos* folded the pages which for the first time since the paper was started, were not dry.

Here the water rose over the topmost letter, and a moist silence prevailed till a sudden jerk fished up the bag, and before the dolls could recover their wits, they were spread out on the floor of a mail car to dry, while several busy men sorted and saved such papers and letters as still held together.

"Now we shall see something," said Flora, feeling the warm air blow over her as they spun along, for a slight accident like this did not delay the energetic Westerners a moment longer than absolutely necessary.

"I can't see you, dear, but I hope you look better than I do, for the yellow of my hair has washed into my eyes and the red of my cheeks is quite gone, I'm sure," answered Dora, as her wet dress flopped in

the breeze and the broken foot sticking up showed her that her blue boots were ruined.

"I don't care a bit how I look. It's great fun now we are safe. Pop up your head and see the wide prairie flying past. I do hope that poor baby got away and swam home to his mother. The upset into the river was quite to his taste, I fancy," said Flora, who was much excited by her adventure and eager for more.

Presently one of the men set the dolls up in the corner of a window to dry, and there they stood viewing the fine landscape with one eye while the other watched the scene of devastation within. Everything was in great confusion after the accident, so it is not strange that the dolls were not missed when they slowly slid lower and lower till a sudden lurch of the car sent them out of the window to roll into a green field where cows were feeding and children picking strawberries.

"This is the end of us! Here we shall lie and mould forgotten by everybody," said Dora, who always took a tragical view of things.

"Not a bit of it! I see cows eating toward us and they may give us a lift. I've heard of their tossing people up, though I don't know just how it's done. If they don't, we are in the path and some of those

children are sure to find us," answered Flora cheerfully, though she stood on her head with a bunch of burrs pricking her nose.

She was right. A bright-eyed little German girl presently came trotting along the path with a great basket full of berries on her head arranged in pretty pottles ready for the market. Seeing the red cow sniffing at a brown paper parcel she drove her away, picked it up, and peeped in at the open end.

The sight of two dolls in such a place made her feel as if fairies had dropped them there for her. She could not read the direction and hurried home to show her treasure to her brothers and sisters, of whom there were eight.

"What will become of us now!" exclaimed Dora, as eager hands slipped them out of the wrapper and smoothed their damp skirts in a room that seemed swarming with boys and girls of all sizes.

"Don't worry, we shall get on nicely, I'm sure, and learn German of these young persons. It is a great relief to be able to stretch one's limbs and stand up, isn't it?" answered Flora, undismayed by anything that had happened as yet.

"Yes, dear, I love you, but I *am* tired of being tied to you all day. I hope we shall live through this noise and get a little rest, but I give up the idea of

ever seeing Portland," answered Dora, staring with all her blue eyes at the display of musical instruments about the room and longing to stop her ears,

for several of the children were playing on the violin, flute, horn, and harp. They were street musicians, and even the baby seemed to be getting ready to take part in the concert, for he sat on the floor beside an immense bass horn taller than himself, with his rosy lips at the mouth piece and his cheeks puffed

out in vain attempts to make a "boom! boom!" as brother Fritz did.

Flora was delighted and gave skips on her red boots in time to the lively tooting of the boys, while the girls gazed at the lovely dolls and jabbered away with their yellow braids quivering with excitement.

The wrapper was laid aside till a neighbor who read English came in to translate it. Meantime they enjoyed the new toys immensely, and even despondent Dora was cheered up by the admiration she received; while they in their turn were deeply interested in the pretty dolls' furniture some of the children made.

Beds, tables, and chairs covered the long bench, and round it sat the neat-handed little maidens gluing, tacking, and trimming, while they sang and chatted at their work as busy and happy as a hive of bees.

All day the boys went about the streets playing, and in the evening trooped off to the beer gardens to play again, for they lived in Chicago. As the dolls soon discovered, they had gone that far on their way to Aunt Maria.

For nearly two months they lived happily with Minna, Gretchen, and Nanerl; then they set out on their travels again, and this was the way it hap-

pened. A little girl came to order a set of furniture for her new baby house, and seeing two shabby dolls reposing in a fine bed she asked about them. Her mamma spoke German; so Minna told how they were found and showed the old wrapper, saying that they always meant to send the dolls on their way but grew so fond of them they kept putting it off.

"I am going as far as New York very soon and will take them along if you like, for I think little Miss Maria Plum must have been expecting her dolls all this time. Shall I?" asked the mamma, as she read the address and saw the dash under "With care", as if the dollies were of great importance to some one.

"*Ja, ja*," answered Minna, glad to oblige a lady who bought two whole sets of their best furniture and paid for it at once.

So again the dolls were put in their brown paper cover and sent away with farewell kisses.

"This now is genteel and just suits me," said Dora, as they drove along with little Clara to the handsome house where she was staying.

"I have a feeling that she is a spoilt child, and we shall not be as happy with her as with the dear Poppleheimers. We shall see," answered Flora,

wisely, for Clara had soon tossed the dolls into a corner and was fretting because mamma would not buy her the big horn to blow on.

The party started for New York in a day or two, and to the delight of Flo and Do they were left out of the trunks for Clara to play with on the way, her

own waxen Blanche Marie Annabel being too delicate to be used.

"O my patience, this is worse than tumbling about in a mail bag," groaned Dora, after hours of great suffering, for Clara treated the poor dolls as if they had no feeling.

She amused herself with knocking their heads together, shutting them in the window with their poor legs hanging out, swinging them by one arm, and drawing lines with a pencil all over their faces till they looked as if tattooed by savages. Even brave Flora was worn out and longed for rest, finding her only comfort in saying, "I told you so," when Clara banged them about, or dropped them on the dusty floor to be trampled on by passing feet.

There they were left, and would have been swept away if a little dog had not found them as the passengers were leaving the car and carried them after his master, trotting soberly along with the bundle in his mouth, for fortunately Clara had put them into the paper before she left them, so they were still together in the trials of the journey.

"Hullo, Jip, what have you there?" asked the young man, as the little dog jumped up on the carriage seat and laid his load on his master's knee,

panting and wagging his tail as if he had done something to be praised for.

"Dolls, I declare! What can a bachelor do with the poor things? Wonder who Maria Plum is? Midge will like a look at them before we send them along;" and into the young man's pocket they went, trembling with fear of the dog, but very grateful for being rescued from destruction.

Jip kept his eye on them and gave an occasional poke with his cold nose to be sure they were there as they drove through the bustling streets of New York to a great house with an inscription over the door.

"I do hope Midge will be a nicer girl than Clara. Children ought to be taught to be kind to dumb dolls as well as dumb animals," said Dora, as the young man ran up the steps and hurried along a wide hall.

"I almost wish we were at home with our own kind little mothers," began Flo, for even her spirits were depressed by bad treatment, but just then a door opened and she cried out in amazement, "Bless my heart, this man has more children than even Mr. Poppleheimer!"

She might well think so, for all down both sides of the long room stood little white beds with a small

pale face on every pillow. All the eyes that were open brightened when Jip and his master came in, and several thin hands were outstretched to meet them.

"I've been good, Doctor; let me pat him first," cried one childish voice.

"Did you bring me a flower, please?" asked another feeble one.

"I know he's got something nice for us; I see a bundle in his pocket," and a little fellow who sat up among his pillows gave a joyful cough, as he could not shout.

"Two dollies for Midge to play with. Jip found them, but I think the little girl they are going to will lend them for a few days. We shall not need them longer, I'm afraid," added the young man to a rosy-faced nurse who came along with a bottle in her hand.

"Dear no, the poor child is very low to-day. But she will love to look at the babies if she isn't strong enough to hold them," said the woman, leading the way to a corner where the palest of all the pale faces lay smiling on the pillow and the thinnest of the thin hands were feebly put up to greet the Doctor.

"So nice!" she whispered when the dolls were laid

beside her, while Jip proudly beat his tail on the floor to let her know that she owed the welcome gift to him.

For an hour Flo and Do lay on the arm of poor Midge, who never moved except to touch them now and then with a tender little finger, or to kiss them

softly, saying, "Dear babies, it is very nice not to be all alone. Are you comfy, darlings?" till she fell asleep still smiling.

"Sister, do you think this can be the Heaven we hear people talk about? It is so still and white, and maybe these children are angels," whispered Dora, looking at the sweet face turned toward her with the

long lashes lying on the colorless cheek and the arms outstretched like wings.

"No, dear, it is a hospital; I heard that man say so; and those are sick children come to be cured. It is a sweet place, I think, and this child is much nicer than that horrid Clara," answered Flo, who was quicker to hear, see, and understand what went on than Dora.

"I love to lie here safe and warm, but there doesn't seem to be much breath to rock me," said Do, who lay nearest the little bosom that very slowly rose and fell with the feeble flutter of the heart below.

"Hush, we may disturb her," and lively Flo controlled her curiosity, contenting herself with looking at the other children and listening to their quiet voices, for pain seemed to have hushed them all.

For a week the dolls lay in Midge's bed, and though their breasts were full of sawdust and their heads were only wood, the sweet patience of the little creature seemed to waken something like a heart in them and set them thinking, for dolls don't live in vain, I am firmly persuaded.

All day she tended them, till the small hands could no longer hold them, and through the weary nights she tried to murmur bits of lullabies lest the dollies

would not be able to sleep because of the crying or the moans some of the poor babies could not repress. She often sent one or the other to cheer up some little neighbor, and in this way Do and Flo became small sisters of charity, welcomed eagerly, reluctantly returned, and loved by all, although they never uttered a word and their dingy faces could not express the emotion that stirred their sawdust bosoms.

When Saturday night came, they were laid in their usual place on Midge's arm. She was too weak to kiss them now, and nurse laid their battered cheeks against the lips that whispered faintly, "Be sure you send them to the little girl, and tell her — tell her — all about it." Then she turned her cheek to the pillow with a little sigh and lay so still the dolls thought she had gone to sleep.

She had, but the sweet eyes did not open in the morning, and there was no breath in the little breast to rock the dolls any more.

"I knew she was an angel, and now she has flown away," said Dora softly, as they watched the white image carried out in the weeping nurse's arms, with the early sunshine turning all the pretty hair to gold.

"I think that is what they call dying, sister. It is

a much lovelier way to end than as we do in the dust bin or rag bag. I wonder if there is a little Heaven anywhere for good dolls?" answered Flora, with what looked like a tear on her cheek; but it was only a drop from the violets sent by the kind Doctor last night.

"I hope so, for I think the souls of little children might miss us if they loved us as dear Midge did," whispered Dora, trying to kiss the blue flower in her hand, for the child had shared her last gift with these friends.

"Why didn't you let her take them along, poor motherless baby?" asked the doctor when he saw the dolls lying as she had left them.

"I promised her they should go to the girl they were sent to, and please, I'd like to keep my word to the little darling," answered Nurse with a sob.

"You shall," said the Doctor, and put them in his breast pocket with the faded violets, for everybody loved the pauper child sent to die in a hospital, because Christian charity makes every man and woman father and mother to these little ones.

All day the dolls went about in the busy Doctor's pocket, and I think the violets did them good, for the soft perfume clung to them long afterward like

the memory of a lovely life, as short and sweet as that of the flowers.

In the evening they were folded up in a fresh paper and re-directed carefully. The Doctor wrote a little note telling why he had kept them and was just about to put on some stamps when a friend came in who was going to Boston in the morning.

"Anything to take along, Fred?" asked the newcomer.

"This parcel, if you will. I have a feeling that I'd rather not have it knock about in a mail bag," and the Doctor told him why.

It was pleasant to see how carefully the traveller put away the parcel after that and to hear him say that he was going through Boston to the mountains for his holiday and would deliver it in Portland to Miss Plum herself.

"Now there is some chance of our getting there," said Flora, as they set off next day in a new Russia leather bag.

On the way they overheard a long chat between some New York and Boston ladies which impressed them very much. Flora liked to hear the fashionable gossip about clothes and people and art and theatres, but Dora preferred the learned conversa-

tion of the young Boston ladies, who seemed to know a little of everything, or think they did.

"I hope Mamma will give me an entirely new wardrobe when I get home; and we shall have dolls' weddings and balls and a play, and be as fine and fashionable as those ladies down there," said Flora, after listening a while.

"Your head is full of dressy ideas and high life, sister. I don't care for such things, but mean to cultivate my mind as fast as I can. That girl says she is in college, and named over more studies than I can count. I do wish we were to stop and see a little of the refined society of Boston," answered Dora, primly.

"Pooh!" said Flo. "Don't you try to be intellectual, for you are only a wooden-headed doll. I mean to be a real Westerner and just enjoy myself as I please, without caring what other folks do or think. Boston is no better than the rest of the world, I guess."

Groans from every article in the bag greeted this disrespectful speech, and an avalanche of Boston papers fell upon the audacious doll. But Flo was undaunted, and shouted from underneath the pile: "I don't care! Minnesota forever!" till her breath gave out.

Dora was so mortified that she never said a word till they were let out in a room at the Parker House. Here she admired everything and read all the evening in a volume of Emerson's Poems from the bag, for Mr. Mt. Vernon Beacon was a Boston man and never went anywhere without a wise book or two in his pocket.

Flo turned up her nose at all she saw and devoted herself to a long chat with the smart bag which came from New York and was full of gossip.

The next afternoon they really got to Portland, and as soon as Mr. Beacon had made his toilet, he set out to find little Miss Plum. When the parlor door opened to admit her, he was much embarrassed, for, advancing with a paternal smile and the dolls extended to the expected child, he found himself face to face with a pretty young lady.

A few words explained the errand, however, and since she had long before received Mr. Plum's note, Aunt Maria's bright eyes were full of tears. Hugging the dilapidated dolls she said:

"I'll write the story of their travels and send the dear old things back to the children as soon as possible."

And so she did with Mr. Beacon's help, for he decided to try the air of Portland and spent his

vacation there. The dolls were re-painted and re-dressed till they were more beautiful than ever and their clothes fine enough to suit even Flo.

They were a good while doing this, and when all was ready, Aunt Maria took it into her head to run out to St. Paul and surprise the children. By a singular coincidence Mr. Beacon had railroad business in that direction, so they set off together, with two splendid dolls done up in a gay box.

All that was ever known about that journey was that these travellers stopped at the hospital in New York and went on better friends than before after hearing from the good Doctor all the pathetic story of little Midge.

The young Plums had long ago given up the hope of ever seeing Do and Flo again, for they started in June and it was early in September when Aunt Maria appeared before them without the least warning, accompanied by a pleasant gentleman from Boston.

Six kisses had hardly resounded from Aunty's blooming cheeks when a most attractive box was produced from the Russia leather bag and the wandering dolls restored to the arms of their enraptured mammas.

A small volume neatly written and adorned with

a few pictures of the most exciting incidents of the trip also appeared.

"Every one writes or prints a book in Boston, you know, so we did both," said Aunt Maria, laughing, as she handed over the remarkable history which she had composed and Mr. Beacon illustrated.

It was read with intense interest and was as true as most stories are nowadays.

"Nothing more delightful can happen now!" exclaimed the children, as they laid aside the precious work and enthroned the travelled dolls in the place of honor on the roof of the baby house.

But something much more delightful did happen, for at Thanksgiving time there was a wedding at the Plums'. Not a dolls' wedding, as Flo had planned, but a real one, for the gentleman from Boston actually married Aunt Maria.

There were six bridesmaids, all in blue, and Flora and Dora, in the loveliest of new pink gowns, were set aloft among the roses on the wedding cake, their proper place as everyone said, for there never would have been any marriage at all but for this Dolls' Journey From Minnesota to Maine.

MORNING-GLORIES

"What's that?" — and Daisy sat up in her little bed to listen; for she had never heard a sound like it before.

It was very early, and the house was still. The sun was just rising, and the morning-glories at the window were turning their blue and purple cups to catch the welcome light. The sky was full of rosy clouds; dew shone like diamonds on the waving grass, and the birds were singing as they sing only at dawn. But softer, sweeter than any bird voice was the delicate music which Daisy heard. So airy and gay was the sound, it seemed impossible to lie still with that fairy dancing tune echoing through the room. Out of bed scrambled Daisy, her sleepy eyes opening wider and wider with surprise and pleasure as she listened and wondered.

"Where is it?" she said, popping her head out of the window. The morning-glories only danced lightly on their stems; the robins chirped shrilly in the garden below; and the wind gave Daisy a kiss. But none of them answered her, and still the lovely music sounded close beside her.

"It's a new kind of bird, perhaps; or maybe it's

a fairy hidden somewhere. Oh, if it *is*, how splendid it will be!" cried Daisy; and she began to look carefully in all the colored cups, under the leaves of the woodbine, and in the wren's nest close by. There was neither fairy nor bird to be seen; and Daisy stood wondering, when a voice cried out from below:

"Why, little nightcap, what brings you out of your bed so early?"

"O Aunt Wee! Do you hear it — that pretty music playing somewhere near? I can't find it; but I think it's a fairy, don't you?" said Daisy, looking down at the young lady standing in the garden with her hands full of roses.

Aunt Wee listened, smiled, and shook her head.

"Don't you remember you said last night that you thought the world a very stupid, grown-up place, because there were no giants and fairies in it now? Well, perhaps there *are* fairies, and they are going to show themselves to you, if you watch well."

Daisy clapped her hands and danced about on her little bare feet; for, of all things in the world, she most wanted to see a fairy.

"What must I do to find them, Aunt Wee?" she cried, popping out her head again with her cap half off and her curly hair blowing in the wind.

"Why, you see, they frolic all night and go to sleep at dawn; so we must get up very early, if we want to catch the elves awake. They are such delicate, fly-away little things, and we are so big and clumsy that we shall have to look carefully and perhaps hunt a long time before we find even one," replied Aunt Wee, very gravely.

"Mamma says I'm quick at finding things; and you know all about fairies, so I guess we'll catch one. Can't we begin now? It's very early, and this music has waked me up; so I don't want to sleep any more. Will you begin to hunt now?"

"But you don't like to get up early, or to walk in the fields; and, if we mean to catch a fairy, we must be up and out by sunrise every fair morning till we get one. Can you do this, lazy Daisy?" And Aunt Wee smiled to herself as if something pleased her very much.

"Oh! I will, truly, get up and not fret a bit, if you'll only help me look. Please come to dress me and see if you can find what makes the music."

Daisy was very much in earnest and in such a hurry to be off that she could hardly stand still to have her hair brushed and thought there were a great many unnecessary buttons and strings on her

clothes that day. Usually she lay late, got up slowly, and fretted at everything, as little girls are apt to do when they have had too much sleep. She wasn't a rosy, stout Daisy, but had been ill and had fallen into a way of thinking she couldn't do anything but lie about, reading fairy tales and being petted by every one. Mamma and papa had tried all sorts of things to amuse and do her good, for she was their only little daughter, and they loved her very dearly. But nothing pleased her long; and she lounged about, pale and fretful, till Aunt Laura came. Daisy called her "Wee" when she was a baby and couldn't talk plainly; and she still used the name because it suited the cheery little aunt so well.

"I don't see anything, and the music has stopped. I think some elf just came to wake you up, and then flew away; so we won't waste any more time in looking here," said Wee, as she finished dressing Daisy, who flew about like a will-o'-the-wisp all the while.

"Do you think it will come again to-morrow?" asked Daisy anxiously.

"I dare say you'll hear it, if you wake in time. Now get your hat, and we will see what we can find down by the brook. I saw a great many fireflies there last night, and fancy there was a ball; so we may

find some drowsy elf among the buttercups and clover."

Away rushed Daisy for her hat, and soon was walking gayly down the green lane, looking about her as if she had never been there before; for everything seemed wonderfully fresh and lovely.

"How pink the clouds are, and how the dew twinkles in the grass! I never saw it so before," she said.

"Because by the time you are up the pretty pink clouds are gone, and the thirsty grass has drunk the dew, or the sun has drawn it up to fall again at night for the flowers' evening bath," replied Wee, watching the soft color that began to touch Daisy's pale cheeks.

"I think we'd better look under that cobweb spread like a tent over the white clovers. A fairy would be very likely to creep in there and sleep."

Daisy knelt down and peeped carefully; but all she saw was a little brown spider, who looked very much surprised to see visitors so early.

"I don't like spiders," said Daisy, much disappointed.

"There are things about spiders as interesting to hear as fairy tales," said Wee. "This is Mrs. Epeira Diadema; and she is a respectable, industrious lit-

tle neighbor. She spreads her tent, but sits under a leaf near by, waiting for her breakfast. She wraps her eggs in a soft silken bag and hides them in some safe chink, where they lie till spring. The eggs are prettily carved and ornamented and so hard that the baby spiders have to force their way out by biting the shell open and poking their little heads through. The mother dies as soon as her eggs are safely placed, and the spiderlings have to take care of themselves."

"How do you know about it, Aunt Wee? You talk as if Mrs. Eppyra — or whatever her name is — had told you herself. Did she?" asked Daisy, feeling more interested in the brown spider.

"No; I read it in a book and saw pictures of the eggs, web, and family. I had a live one in a bottle, and she spun silken ladders all up and down and a little room to sleep in. She ate worms and bugs and was very amiable and interesting till she fell ill and died."

"I should like to see the book and have a spider bottle, so I could take care of the poor little orphans when they are born. Good-by, Mrs. Spider. I shall call again; for you are 'most as good as a fairy there in your pretty tent, with a white clover for your bed."

Daisy walked on a few steps and then stopped to say:

"What does that bird mean by calling, 'Hurry up, hurry up,'? He keeps flying before us and looking back as if he wanted to show me something."

"Let me hear what he says. I may be able to understand him or the bobolink that swings on the alder by the brook."

Wee listened a moment, while the birds twittered and chirped with all their hearts. Presently Wee sang in a tone very like the bobolink's:

"Daisy and Wee,
Come here, and see
What a dainty feast is spread:
Down in the grass
Where fairies pass,
Here are berries ripe and red.

"All wet with dew,
They wait for you:
Come hither, and eat your fill,
While I gayly sing,
In my airy swing,
And the sun climbs up the hill."

"Did he really say that?" cried Daisy, watching the bobolink, who sat swaying up and down on the

green bough and nodding his white-capped head at her in the most friendly manner.

"Perhaps I didn't translate it rightly; for it is very hard to put bird notes into our language, because we haven't words soft and sweet enough. But I really think there are berries over there, and we will see if what he says is true," said Wee.

Over the wall they went and there, on a sunny bank, found a bed of the reddest, ripest berries ever seen.

"Thank you, thank you, for telling me to hurry up and showing me such a splendid feast," said Daisy, with her mouth full, as she nodded back at the birds. "These are so much sweeter than those we buy. I'd carry some home to mamma, if I only had a basket."

"You can pick this great leaf full, while I make you a basket," said Wee.

Daisy soon filled the leaf and then sat watching her aunt plait a pretty basket of rushes. While she waited, she looked about, and kept finding something curious or pleasant to interest and amuse her. First she saw a tiny rainbow in a dewdrop that hung on a blade of grass; then she watched a frisky calf come down to drink on the other side of the brook and laughed to see him scamper away with his tail in

the air. Close by grew a pitcher plant; and a yellow butterfly sat on the edge, bathing its feet, Daisy said. Presently she discovered a little ground bird sitting on her nest and peeping anxiously, as if undecided whether to fly away or trust her.

"I won't hurt you, little mother. Don't be afraid," whispered the child; and, as if she understood, the bird settled down on her nest with a comfortable chirp, while her mate hopped up to give her a nice plump worm for breakfast.

"I love birds. Tell me something about them, Aunt Wee. You must know many things; for they like you, and come when you call."

"Once upon a time," began Wee, while her fingers flew and the pretty basket grew, "there was a great snowstorm, and all the country was covered with a thick white quilt. It froze a little, so one could walk over it, and I went out for a run. Oh, so cold it was, with a sharp wind and no sun or anything green to make it pleasant! I went far away over the fields and sat down to rest. While I sat there, a little bird came by and stopped to rest also.

" 'How do you do?' said I.

" 'Chick-a-dee-dee,' said he.

" 'A cold day,' said I.

" 'Chick-a-dee-dee,' said he.

" 'Aren't you afraid of starving, now the ground is covered and the trees are bare?'

" 'Chick-a-dee-dee! Chick-a-dee-dee!" answered the bird in the same cheerful tone. And it sounded as if he said, 'I shall be cared for. I'm not afraid.'

" 'What will you eat? There's nothing here or for miles around. I really think you'll starve, birdie,' said I.

"Then he laughed and gave me a merry look as he lighted on a tall, dry weed near by. He shook it hard with his little bill, when down fell a shower of seeds, and there was dinner all ready on a snow-white cloth. All the while he ate, he kept looking up at me with his quick, bright eyes; and, when he had done, he said, as plainly as a bird could say it:

" 'Cold winds may blow,
And snows may fall,
But well we know
God cares for all.' "

"I like that little story and shall always think of it when I hear the chickadee." Daisy sat a moment with a thoughtful look in her eyes; then she said slowly, as if sorry for the words:

"It isn't a stupid, grown-up world. It's a very pleasant, young world; and I like it a great deal better this morning than I did last night."

"I'm glad of that; and even if we don't find our fairy to-day, you will have found some sunshine, Daisy, and that is almost as good. Now put in the berries, and we'll go on."

How they hunted! They climbed trees to peep into squirrel holes and birds' nests; they chased bees and butterflies to ask for news of the elves; they waded in the brook, hoping to catch a water sprite; they ran after thistledown, fancying a fairy might be astride; they searched the flowers and ferns, questioned sun and wind, listened to robin and thrush; but no one could tell them anything of the little people, though all had gay and charming bits of news about themselves. And Daisy thought the world got younger and happier every minute.

When they came in to breakfast, papa and mamma looked at Daisy, and then nodded with a smile at Aunt Wee; for though Daisy's frock was soiled, her boots wet, and her hair tumbled, her cheeks were rosy, eyes bright, and voice so cheerful that they thought it better music than any in the summer world without.

"Hunting fairies is a pleasant play, isn't it, Daisy?" said papa, as he tasted the berries and admired the green basket.

"Oh, yes! And we are going again to-morrow.

They chased bees and butterflies to ask for news of the elves.

Aunt Wee says we must try seven days at least. I like it and mean to keep on till I really find my fairy."

"I think you will find something better than 'little vanishers', dear," said mamma, filling up the bowl of bread and milk which Daisy was fast emptying; for she certainly *had* found an appetite.

"There it is again!" cried Daisy, flying out of bed the next morning still earlier than the day before. Yes, there it was, the fairy music, as blithe and sweet as ever; and the morning-glories rung their delicate bells as if keeping time. Daisy felt rather sleepy, but remembered her promise to Aunt Wee and splashed into her tub, singing the bobolink's song as she bathed.

"Where shall we go to-day?" she asked, as they went out into the garden.

"I think we'd better try a new place; so we'll go to the farmyard; and while we feed the hens, I'll listen to their chat, and perhaps can learn something from it," replied Wee soberly.

"Do hens know about fairies? I thought they were very dull things, and didn't care for anything but eating corn and laying eggs," said Daisy, surprised.

"Oh, dear, no! They are very sensible creatures

and see a deal of the world in their daily walks. Hunting for insects gives them an excellent chance to see fairies, if there are any. Here is some corn for the biddies; and after we have fed them, we will look for eggs, and so may find a brownie or two."

Such a clatter as there was when they came to the barnyard; for everything was just awake and in the best spirits. Ducks were paddling off to the pond, geese to the meadow, and meek, gray guinea hens tripping away to hunt bugs in the garden. A splendid cock stood on the wall and crowed so loud and clear that all the neighboring chanticleers replied. The motherly hens clucked and scratched with their busy broods about them, or sat and scolded in the coops because the chicks would gad abroad. Doves cooed on the sunny roof and smoothed their gleaming feathers. Daisy's donkey nibbled a thistle by the wall, and a stately peacock marched before the door with all his plumage spread. It made Daisy laugh to see the airs the fowls put on as she scattered corn and threw meal and water to the chicks. Some pushed and gobbled; some stood meekly outside the crowd and got what they could; others seized a mouthful and ran away to eat it in a corner. The chicks got into the pan entirely and tumbled one over the other in their hurry to eat; but the

mammas saw that none went hungry. And the polite cock waited upon them in the most gentlemanly manner, making queer little clucks and gurgles as if he said:

"Allow me, madam, to offer you this kernel"; or, "Here, my dear, try that bit." And sometimes he pecked a little, with a loud quaver, evidently saying, "Come, come, children, behave yourselves, and don't eat like pigs."

"What is she saying?" asked Daisy, pointing to an old gray hen in a black turban, who was walking about alone, muttering to herself, as hens often do in their promenades.

"She says a cat has made a nest and hatched three kits up in the loft, near her own nest; and she doesn't like it, because their mewing annoys her," said Wee, after listening a minute.

"How nice! Let's go and find them. But do you learn anything about the fairies from the hens' chat?"

"No; they have been so busy setting, they have had no time for picnics yet. But they will let us know, if they discover any."

In the barn, the cows were being milked; and Daisy had a mug full of it, warm and sweet, out of the foaming pail.

"We'll take some to Mrs. Purr; for, I dare say, she doesn't like to leave the kits long and will enjoy a sip of something comfortable," said Wee, as Daisy climbed the ladder and went rustling over the hay to a corner, whence came a joyful "Mew!" What a charming sight it was, to be sure! A snow-white cat lying in a cosy nest and, by her, three snow-white kits, wagging three very small gray tails!

"There never was anything so lovely!" cried Daisy, as she sat with the three downy balls in her lap, while the mamma gratefully lapped the new milk from Aunt Wee's cup.

"Are they better than fairies?"

"Almost; for I know about pussies and can cuddle them; but I couldn't a fairy, you know, and they might be afraid of me. These dears are not afraid, and I shall have such fun with them as they grow up. What *shall* we name them, auntie?"

"Snowball, Patpaw, and Wagtail would do, I think," said Wee, stroking the cat, who rubbed against her, purring very loud.

"Yes, I like those names for my pets. But what is Mrs. Purr saying, with her mouth up to your ear?" asked Daisy, who firmly believed that Aunt Wee knew everything.

"She tells me that when she went on a grasshop-

per hunt the other day, as she ran through the meadow, she saw some lovely creatures all in blue, with gauze wings, flying about over the river and sitting in the water lilies. She thinks they may be fairies and advises us to go and look."

"So we will to-morrow," said Daisy. "Ask her, please, if I may take the kits into the house, if I'll be very careful and give them a nice big bed to sleep in."

"She says you may; but she must go too, else the kits will cry," said Wee, after listening to Pussy purr a minute.

Much pleased with her new pets, Daisy took them in her apron and, followed by their confiding mamma, marched to the house and established them in the old cradle which used to be hers. Pussy got in also; and when they were settled on a soft cushion, Daisy rocked them gently to and fro. At first Mrs. Purr opened her yellow eyes and looked rather anxious! But as nothing uncomfortable happened, she composed herself and soon quite liked the motion; for she fell asleep and made a pretty picture as she lay with her downy white babies on her downy white breast.

When the sun rose next morning, he saw Daisy and Wee floating down the river in their boat.

"Bless me! Here's company," said the sun, and began at once to make them welcome in his most charming manner. He set the waves to sparkling with a sudden shimmer; he shot long rays of light through the dark hemlocks, till they looked like fairy trees; he touched Daisy's hair, and it turned to gold; he chased away the shadows that lurked among the hills; he drew up the misty curtain that hovered over the river; and, with the warmth of his kisses, he waked the sleeping lilies.

"Look, look, Aunt Wee, how they open, one by one, as the light shines on them! We shan't have to wait any longer, for they get up with the sun, as you do." As she spoke, Daisy caught a half-open lily and drew it up, fragrant and dripping, fresh from its sleep.

"They look like a fleet of fairy ships, anchored in this quiet harbor, with sails half furled and crews asleep. See the little sailors, in their yellow jackets, lifting up their heads as the wind blows its whistle, like a boatswain, to 'pipe all hands.' "

Daisy laughed at Aunt Wee's fancy and stirred up the crew of the Water Sprite, as she called her flower, till the white sails were all set, and it was ready for a summer voyage.

"It is time we saw the fairies in blue, unless old

Madam Purr deceived us. I hope we *shall* find one; for, though I enjoy everything we see, I do want my elf too."

"What is that?" cried Wee; and Daisy flew up so quickly that the boat rocked like a cradle. A slender creature, in a blue dress, with gauzy wings, darted by and vanished among the rushes that nodded by the bank.

"Go nearer — softly! softly! — and maybe it will fly out again. I really think it was a fairy, for I never saw anything like it before," whispered Daisy, much excited.

Wee rowed in among the green rushes and purple water weeds, and out flew half a dozen of the blue-bodied creatures. They didn't seem afraid, but skimmed about the boat, as if curious to see what it was; and Daisy sat and stared with all her might. presently one of the lovely things lighted on the lily in her hand, and she held her breath to watch it. A little shadow of disappointment passed over her face as she looked; but it was gone at once, and her voice was full of delight as she said softly:

"It's not a fairy, Aunt Wee; but it is very beautiful, with its slender blue body, its lacy wings, and bright eyes. What name does it have?"

"We call it a dragon fly; and it could tell you a

pretty little story about itself, could you understand it. In May the tiny eggs are dropped on the water and sink to the bottom, where little creatures are born — ugly, brown things, with six legs and no wings. They feed on water insects and for a long time swim about in this state. When ready, they climb up the stem of some plant and sit in the sun till the ugly brown shells drop away, and the lovely

winged creatures appear. They grow in an hour to be perfect dragon flies, and float away to lead happy lives in the sunshine by the river."

As if only waiting till the story was done, the dragon fly flew off with a whirr and darted to and fro, hunting for its breakfast, glittering splendidly as it flashed among the leaves or darted close above the water. Daisy forgot her disappointment in a minute and went fishing for lilies, while the turtles came up to sun themselves on the rocks; the merry little tadpoles wiggled in the shallow places; and a wild duck paddled by with a brood of ducklings following in her wake.

"Oh, dear! It rains, and we can't go fairy hunting at all," said Daisy next morning, as the patter on the window pane woke her up, and Aunt Wee came in to dress her.

"Yes, we can, dear; jump up, and see what a funny place I'll take you to."

Daisy thought the rain would be a capital excuse for lying in bed, for she still liked to cuddle and drowse in her cozy, warm nest. But she was eager to know where the curious place was, so she got up and followed.

"Why, Aunt Wee, this is the garret; and there isn't anything nice or funny here," she said, as they

climbed the stairs and came into the big attic, filled with all manner of old things.

"Isn't there? We'll soon see." And so they did; for Aunt Wee began to play; and presently Daisy was shouting with fun as she sat on an old saddle, with a hair-covered trunk for a horse, a big old-fashioned bonnet on her head, and a red silk petticoat for a habit. Then they went to sea in a great chest and got wrecked on a desert island, where they built a fort with boxes and bags, hunted bears with rusty guns, and had to eat dried berries, herbs, and nuts, for no other food could be found. Aunt Wee got an old fiddle and had a dancing school, where Daisy capered till she was tired. So they rummaged out some dusty books and looked at pictures so quietly that a little mouse came out of a drawer and peeped about, thinking no one was there.

"Let's find the nest, since we don't find any fairy," said Wee; and, opening the drawer, she turned over the things till she came to a pair of old velvet shoes; and there in the toe of one, nicely cuddled under a bit of flannel, lay four pink mites, which woke up and stretched their tiny legs and squeaked such small squeaks one could hardly hear them.

"How cunning they are! I wish they would let me put them with the kits and have a nursery full of babies. Wouldn't it be nice to see them all grow up?" said Daisy.

"I'm afraid they wouldn't grow up, if Mrs. Purr lived with them," began Wee, but got no further, for just then the cat bounced into the drawer and ate up the mouselings in four mouthfuls. Daisy screamed; the mother mouse gave a doleful squeak and ran into a hole; and Aunt Wee tried to save the little ones. But it was too late; Purr had caught her breakfast and sat washing her face after it, as if she had enjoyed it.

"Never mind, Daisy. She would have caught them by and by, and it's as well to have them taken care of before they do any harm. There is the bell. Don't cry, but come and tell papa what a fine romp we've had."

"It doesn't rain, but it's dreadfully wet; so we'll go to the dairy and see if any sprites are hiding there," said Wee next day; and to the dairy they went.

A pleasant place it was — so clean and cool, and as full of sweet odors as if the ghosts of buttercups and clover still haunted the milk which they had helped to make. Dolly was churning, and Polly was

making up butter in nice little pats. Both were very kind and let Daisy peep everywhere. All round on white shelves stood the shining pans, full of milk; the stone floor was wet; a stream of water ran along a narrow bed through the room, and in it stood jars of butter, pots of cream, and cans of milk. The window was open, and hop-vines shook their green bells before it. The birds sang outside, and maids sang inside, as the churn and the wooden spatters kept time:

"Brindle and Bess,
White-star and Jess —
Come, butter, come!
Eat cowslips fine,
Red columbine —
Come, butter, come!
Grasses green and tall,
Clover, best of all —
Come, butter, come!
And give every night
Milk sweet and white —
Come, butter, come!
Make the churn go,
See the lumps grow! —
Come, butter, come!"

Daisy sang also and turned the handle till she was tired; then she helped Polly with the butter and

made four little pats — one stamped with a star for papa, one with a rose for mamma, a strawberry for Aunt Wee, and a cow for herself. She skimmed a pitcher of cream with a shallow shell and liked the work so much she asked to have a little pan of milk put by for her to take care of every day. Dolly promised and gave her a small shell and a low shelf all to herself. When she went in, she carried her pretty pats in one hand, the cream pot in the other, and entered the breakfast room looking as brisk and rosy as a little milkmaid.

It was a lovely morning when Daisy was next roused by the fairy music, and the ponies were standing at the door. "Are we going far?" she asked, as Wee put on her riding skirt and tied back her hair.

"Up to the mountain top! It's only a mile, and we shall have time, if we ride fast," answered Wee.

Away they went, through the green lane, over the bridge, and up the steep hillside where the sheep fed and colts frisked as they passed by. Higher and higher climbed Dandy and Prance, the ponies; and gayer and gayer grew Daisy and Wee, as the fresh air blew over them, and the morning red glowed on their faces. When they reached the top, they sat on a tall stone and looked down into the valley on either side.

"This seems like a place to find giants, not fairies, it is so high and big and splendid up here," said Daisy, as her eye roamed over river, forest, town, and hill.

"There are giants here; and I brought you up to see them," answered Wee.

"Mercy me! Where are they?" cried Daisy, looking very curious and rather frightened.

"There is one of them." And Wee pointed to the waterfall that went dashing and foaming down into the valley. "That giant turns the wheels of all the mills you see. Some of them grind grain for our bread; some help to spin cloth for our clothes; some make paper; and others saw trees into boards. That is a beautiful and busy giant, Daisy."

"So it is, and some day we'll go and see it work. Show me the others. I like your giants 'most as well as those in the fairy books."

"On this side you'll see another, called Steam. He is a very strong fellow; for, with the help of gunpowder, he will break the granite mountain in pieces and carry it away. He works in the other mills and takes heavy loads of stone, cloth, paper, and wood all over the country. Then, on the right of us is a third giant, called Electricity. He runs along those wires and carries messages from one end of

the world to the other. He goes under the sea and through the air; he brings news to everyone, runs day and night, yet never tires, and often helps sick people with his lively magic."

"I like him best, I think, for he is more like a real, wonderful giant. Is there any on that side of us?" asked Daisy, turning round to look behind her.

"Yes, the best and most powerful of all lives in that big house with the bell on the roof," said Wee, smiling.

"Why, that's only the schoolhouse."

"Education is a long word, dear; but you know what it means, and as you grow older, you will see what wonders it can work. It is a noble giant; for in this country rich and poor are helped by it, and no one need suffer for it unless they choose. It works more wonders than any other: it changes little children into wise, good men and women, who rule the world and make happy homes everywhere; it helps write books, sing songs, paint pictures, do good deeds, and beautify the world. Love and respect it, my little Daisy, and be glad that you live now when such giants lend a hand to dwarfs like us."

Daisy sat still a long time, looking all about her on the mountain top; and when she rode away, she carried a new thought in her mind, which she never forgot.

"This is the last day of the seven, and no fairies have been found. Do you think I *ever* shall see one?" said Daisy, on the Sunday morning that ended her week's hunt.

"Not the kind you think of, for there are none such, Daisy; but you have found two better and more beautiful ones than any fanciful sprites," said Wee.

"Have I? Where are they? What are their names?"

Aunt Wee drew her to the glass and said, as she pointed to Daisy's face:

"Here they are, and their names are Health and Happiness. There are many ways of losing them, and they are hard to catch when once lost. I wanted you to keep both and tried to show you how. A happy, healthful hour in the morning sweetens and brightens the whole day; and there is no fairy book half so wonderful as the lovely world all about us, if we only know how to read it."

"Then all these mornings we were hunting after health and happiness, instead of fairies, were we?"

"Yes. Haven't you enjoyed it, and don't you think you have caught my fairies?"

Daisy looked from a little picture of herself, which Wee had drawn some time ago, to her image in the glass. One was dull and sad, pale and cross;

the other, rosy, gay, and smiling — the likeness of a happy, hearty little girl, wide awake and in good tune. She understood the kind joke, and, turning, kissed Aunt Wee, as she said, gratefully:

"I think I have caught your elves, and I'll try to keep them all my life. But tell me one thing: was the music that woke me all a joke too?"

"No, dear; here it is, and now it is your own; for you have learned to wake and listen to it."

Daisy looked and saw Aunt Wee lean from the window and take out of a hollow nook, in the old tree close by, a little box. She set it on the table, touched a spring, and the airy music sounded more beautiful than ever.

"Is it mine, all mine?" cried Daisy.

"Yes, I hid it while I tried my little plan, and now you shall have it for your own. See, here is the best elf I can give you, and she will dance whenever you call her."

Wee pushed a golden pin, and up sprang a tiny figure, all crimson and gold, with shining wings, and a garland on its dainty head. Softly played the hidden music, and airily danced the little sylph till the silvery chime died away; then, folding her delicate arms, she sank from sight, leaving Daisy breathless with delight.

CLAMS

A GHOST STORY

I HAVEN'T a room in the house, ma'am, but if you don't mind going down to the cottage and coming up here to your meals, I can accommodate you, and would be glad to," said Mrs. Grant, in answer to my demand for board.

"Where is the cottage?" and I looked about me, feeling ready to accept anything in the way of shelter, after the long, hot journey from broiling Boston to breezy York Harbor.

"Right down there, just a step, you see. It's all in order, and next week it will be full, for many folks prefer it because of the quiet."

At the end of a precipitous path, which offered every facility for accidents of all sorts, from a sprained ankle to a broken neck, stood the cottage, a little white building with a pretty woodbine over the porch, gay flowers in the garden, and the blue Atlantic rolling up at the foot of the cliff.

"A regular 'Cottage by the Sea.' It will suit me exactly if I can have that front upper room. I don't mind being alone, so have my trunk taken down,

please, and I'll get ready for tea," said I, congratulating myself on my good luck. Alas, how little I knew what a night of terror I was to pass in that picturesque abode!

An hour later, refreshed by my tea and invigorated by the delicious coolness, I plunged recklessly into the gayeties of the season and accepted two invitations for the evening — one to a stroll on Sunset Hill, the other to a clam bake on the beach.

The stroll came first, and while my friend paused at one of the fishily-fragrant houses by the way, to interview her washerwoman, I went on to the hilltop, where a nautical old gentleman with a spyglass welcomed me with the amiable remark:

"Pretty likely place for a prospeck."

Entering into a conversation with this ancient mariner, I asked if he knew any legend or stories concerning the old houses all about us.

"Sights of 'em; but it ain't allers the *old* places as has the most stories concernin' 'em. Why, that cottage down yonder ain't more'n fifty year old, and they say there's been a lot of ghosts seen there, owin' to a man's killin' of himself in the back bedroom."

"What, that house at the end of the lane?" I asked, with sudden interest.

"Jes' so; nice place, but lonesome and dampish. Ghosts and toadstools is apt to locate in houses of that sort," placidly responded the venerable tar.

The dampness scared me more than the goblins, for I never saw a ghost yet, but I had been haunted by rheumatism and found it a hard fiend to exorcise.

"I've taken a room there, so I'm rather interested in knowing what company I'm to have."

"Took a room, hev you? Wal, I dare say you won't be troubled. Some folks have a knack of seeing sperrits, and then agin some hasn't. My wife is uncommon powerful that way, but I ain't; my sight's dreadful poor for that sort of critter."

There was such a sly twinkle in the starboard eye of the old fellow as he spoke, that I laughed outright and asked, sociably:

"Has she ever seen the ghosts of the cottage? I think *I* have rather a knack that way, and I'd like to know what to expect."

"No, her sort is the rappin' kind. Down yonder the only ghost I take much stock in is old Bezee Tucker's. He killed himself in the back bedroom, and some folks say they've heard him groanin' there nights, and a drippin' sound; he bled to death, you know. It was kep' quiet at the time and is forgot-

ten now by all but a few old chaps like me. Bezee was allers civil to the ladies, so I guess he won't bother you, ma'am;" and the old fellow laughed.

"If he does, I'll let you know;" and with that I departed, for my friend called to me that the beach party was clamoring for our company.

In the delights of that festive hour, I forgot the croaking of the ancient mariner, for I was about to taste a clam for the first time in my life, and it was a most absorbing moment. Perched about on the rocks like hungry penguins, we watched the jovial cooks with breathless interest, as they struggled with refractory frying pans, fish that stubbornly refused to brown, steaming seaweed, and hot stones.

A certain captivating little Margie waited upon me so prettily that I should have been tempted to try a sea porcupine unskinned if she had offered it, so irresistible was her chirping way of saying, "Oh, here's a perfectly lovely one! Do take him by his little black head and eat him quick."

So beguiled, I indulged recklessly in clams, served hot between two shells, little dreaming what a price I was to pay for that marine banquet.

We kept up till late, and then I was left at my own door by my friend, who informed me that York

was a very primitive, safe place, where people slept with unlocked doors and nothing ever went amiss o'nights.

I said nothing of the ghosts, being ashamed to own that I quaked a little at the idea of the "back bedroom", as I shut out the friendly faces and bolted myself in.

A lamp and matches stood in the hall, and lighting the lamp, I whisked upstairs with suspicious rapidity, locked my door, and retired to bed, firmly refusing to own even to myself that I had ever heard the name of Bezee Tucker.

Being very tired, I soon fell asleep; but fried potatoes and a dozen or two of hot clams are not viands best fitted to insure quiet repose, so a fit of nightmare brought me to a realizing sense of my indiscretion.

From a chaos of wild dreams was finally evolved a gigantic clam, whose mission it was to devour me as I had devoured its relatives. The sharp shells gaped before me; a solemn voice said, "Take her by her little head and eat her quick." Retribution was at hand, and with a despairing effort to escape by diving, I bumped my head smartly against the wall and woke up feeling as if there was an earthquake under the bed.

Collecting my scattered wits, I tried to compose myself to slumber again; but alas! That fatal feast had murdered sleep, and I vainly tried to lull my wakeful senses with the rustle of woodbine leaves about the window and the breaking waves upon the beach.

In one of the pauses between the ebb and flow of the waves, I heard a curious sound in the house — a muffled sort of moan, coming at regular intervals. And as I sat up to make out where it was, another sound caught my attentive ear. Drip, drip, drip, went something out in the hall, and in an instant the tale told me on Sunset Hill came back with unpleasant vividness.

"Nonsense! It is raining, and the roof leaks," I said to myself, while a disagreeable thrill went through me, and fancy, aided by indigestion, began to people the house with uncanny inmates.

No rain had fallen for weeks, and peeping through my curtain I saw the big, bright stars shining in a cloudless sky; so that explanation failed, and still the drip, drip, drip went on, as did the moaning, so distinctly now that it was evident the little back bedroom was next to the chamber in which I was.

"Some one is sleeping there," I said, and then recollected that all the rooms were locked and all

the keys but mine in Mrs. Grant's pocket up at the house.

"Well, let the goblins enjoy themselves. I won't disturb them if they let me alone. Some of the ladies thought me brave to dare to sleep here, and it will never do to own I was scared by a foolish story and an odd sound."

So down I lay and said the multiplication table industriously for several minutes, trying to turn a deaf ear to the outer world and curb my unruly thoughts. But it was a failure, and when I found myself saying over and over, "Four times twelve is twenty-four," I gave up affecting courage and went in for a good honest scare.

As a cheerful subject for midnight meditation I kept thinking of B. Tucker, in spite of every effort to abstain. In vain I recalled the fact that the departed gentleman was "allers civil to the ladies." I still was in mortal fear lest he might think it necessary to come and apologize in person for "bothering" me.

Presently a clock struck three, and I involuntarily gave a groan that beat the ghost's all hollow, so full of anguish was I at the thought of several hours of weary waiting in such awesome suspense.

I was not sure at what time the daylight would

appear and bitterly regretted not gathering useful information about sunrise, tides, and such things, instead of listening to the foolish gossip of Uncle Peter on the hilltop.

Minute after minute dragged slowly on, and I was just thinking that I should be obliged to shout, "Fire!" as the only means of relief in my power, when a stealthy step under the window gave me a new sensation.

This was a start, not a scare, for the new visitor was a human foe, and I had little fear of such, being possessed of good lungs, strong arms, and a Roman dagger nearly as big as a carving knife. That step broke the spell, and, creeping noiselessly to the window, I peeped out to see a dark figure coming up the stem of the tall tree close by, hand over hand, like a sailor or a monkey.

"Two can play at that game, my friend; you scare me, and I'll scare you!" and with an actual sense of relief in breaking the oppressive silence, I suddenly flung up the curtain and, leaning out, brandished my dagger with what I intended to be an awe-inspiring screech, but owing to the flutter of my breath, the effort ended in a curious mixture of howl and bray.

A most effective sound nevertheless, for the ras-

cal dropped as if shot and, with one upward glance at the white figure dimly seen in the starlight, fled as if a legion of goblins were at his heels.

"What next?" thought I, wondering whether tragedy or comedy would close this eventful night.

I sat and waited, chilly but valiant, while the weird sounds went on within, and silence reigned

without, till the cheerful crow of the punctual "cockadoo", as Margie called him, announced the dawn and laid the ghosts. A red glow in the east banished my last fear, and wrapping the drapery of my couch about me, I soon lay down to quiet slumber, quite worn out.

The sun shining in my face waked me; a bell ringing spasmodically warned me to hurry; and a childish voice calling out, "Bet-fast is most weady, Miss Wee", assured me that sweet little spirits haunted the cottage as well as ghostly ones.

As I left my room to join Margie, who was waiting in the porch and looking like a rosy morning-glory halfway up the woodbine trellis, I saw two things which caused me to feel that the horrors of the night were not all imaginary.

Just outside the back bedroom door was a damp place, as if that part of the floor had been newly washed; and when, goaded by curiosity, I peeped through the keyhole of the haunted chamber, my eye distinctly saw an open razor lying on a dusty table.

My vision was limited to that one object, but it was quite enough, and I went up the hill brooding darkly over the secret hidden in my breast. I longed to tell some one, but was ashamed, and when asked

why so pale and absent-minded, I answered, with a gloomy smile:

"It is the clams."

All day I hid my sufferings pretty well, but as night approached, and I thought of another lonely vigil in the haunted cottage, my heart began to fail, and when we sat telling stories in the dusk, a brilliant idea came into my head.

I would relate my ghost story and rouse the curiosity of the listeners to such a pitch that some of them would offer to share my quarters, in hopes of seeing the spirit of the restless Tucker.

Cheered by this delusive fancy, when my turn came, I made a thrilling tale of the night's adventures, and having worked my audience up to a flattering state of excitement, paused for applause.

It came in a most unexpected form, however, for Mrs. Grant burst out laughing and the two boys, Johnny and Joe, rolled off the piazza in convulsions of merriment.

Much disgusted at this unseemly demonstration, I demanded the cause of it and involuntarily joined in the general shout when Mrs. Grant demolished my ghost by informing me that Bezee Tucker lived, died in, and haunted the tumble-down house at the *other* end of the lane.

"Then who or what made those mysterious noises?" I asked, relieved but rather nettled at the downfall of my romance.

"My brother Seth," replied Mrs. Grant, still laughing. "I thought you might be afraid to be there all alone, so he slipped up into the bedroom, and I forgot to tell you. He's a powerful snorer, and that's one of the awful sounds. The other was the dripping of salt water; for you wanted some, and the girl got it in a leaky pail. Seth wiped up the slops when he came out early in the morning."

I said nothing about the keyhole view of the harmless razor, but feeling that I did deserve some credit for my heroic reception of the burglar, I mildly asked if it was the custom in York for men as well as turkeys to roost in trees.

An explosion from the boys extinguished my last hope of glory, for as soon as he could speak, Joe answered, unable to resist the joke, though telling it betrayed his own transgressions.

"Johnny planned to be up awful early and pick the last cherries off that tree. I wanted to get ahead of him, so I sneaked down before light to humbug him, for I was going a-fishing, and we have to be off by four."

"Did you get your cherries?" I asked, bound to have some of the laugh on my side.

"Guess I didn't," grumbled Joe, rubbing his knees, while Johnny added, with an exulting chuckle:

"He got a horrid scare and a right good scraping, for he didn't know any one was down there. Couldn't go fishing either, he was so lame, and I had the cherries after all. Served him right, didn't it?"

No answer was necessary, for the two lads indulged in a friendly scuffle among the haycocks, while Mrs. Grant went off to repeat the tale in the kitchen, whence the sound of a muffled roar soon assured me that Seth was enjoying the joke as well as the rest of us.

LITTLE MARIE OF LEHON

HERE comes our pretty little girl," I said to Kate, as we sat resting on the seat beside the footpath that leads from Dinan on the hill to Lehon in the valley.

Yes, there she was, trotting toward us in her round cap, blue woolen gown, white apron, and wooden shoes. On her head was a loaf of buckwheat bread as big as a small wheel, in one hand a basket full of green stuff, while the other led an old goat, who seemed in no hurry to get home. We had often seen this rosy, bright-eyed child, had nodded to her, but never spoken, for she looked rather shy and always seemed in haste. Now the sight of the goat reminded us of an excuse for addressing her, and as she was about to pass with the respectful little curtsey of the country, my friend said in French:

"Stay, please. I want to speak to you."

She stopped at once and stood looking at us under her long eyelashes in a timid yet confiding way, very pretty to see.

There she was, trotting toward us.

"We want to drink goat's milk every morning. Can you let us have it, little one?"

"Oh, yes, mademoiselle! Nannette gives fine milk, and no one has yet engaged her," answered the child, her whole face brightening at the prospect.

"What name have you?"

"Marie Rosier, mademoiselle."

"And you live at Lehon?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Have you parents?"

"Truly, yes, of the best. My father has a loom; my mother works in the field and mill with brother Yvon; and I go to school and care for Nannette and nurse little Bebe."

"What school?"

"At the convent, mademoiselle. The good Sisters teach us the catechism; also to write and read and sew. I like it much," and Marie glanced at the little prayer book in her apron pocket, as if proud to show she could read it.

"What age have you?"

"Ten years, mademoiselle."

"You are young to do so much, for we often see you in the market buying and selling, and sometimes digging in your garden there below and bringing

water from the river. Do you love work as well as school?"

"Ah, no; but mademoiselle knows it is necessary to work; every one does, and I am glad to do my part. Yvon works much harder than I, and the father sits all day at his loom, yet he is sick and suffers much. Yes, I am truly glad to help," and little Marie settled the big loaf as if quite ready to bear her share of the burdens.

"Shall we go and see your father about the goat? And if he agrees, will you bring the milk fresh and warm every morning?" I asked, thinking that a sight of that blooming face would brighten our days for us.

"Oh, yes! I always do it for the ladies, and you will find the milk quite fresh and warm, hey, Nannette?" and Marie laughed as she pulled the goat from the hedge where she was nibbling the young leaves.

We followed the child as she went clattering down the stony path, and soon came into the narrow street bounded on one side by the row of low, stone houses and on the other by the green, wet meadow full of willows and the rapid mill stream. All along this side of the road sat women and chil-

dren, stripping the bark from willow twigs to be used in basket making. A busy sight and a cheerful one, for the women gossiped in their high, clear voices; the children sang and laughed; and the babies crept about as freely as young lambs.

We found Marie's home a very poor one — only two rooms in the little hut, the lower one with its earthen floor, beds in the wall, smoky fire, and single window where the loom stood. At it sat a pale, dark man, who stopped work as we entered and seemed glad to rest while we talked to him, or rather while Kate did, for I could not understand his odd French and preferred to watch Marie during the making of the bargain.

Yvon, a stout lad of twelve, was cutting up brush with an old sickle, and little Bebe, looking like a Dutch doll in her tiny round cap, tight blue gown, and bits of sabots, clung to Marie as she got the supper.

I wondered what the children at home would have said to such a supper. A few cabbage leaves made the soup, and this, with the dry black bread and a sip of sour wine, was all they had. There were no plates or bowls, but little hollow places in the heavy wooden table near the edge, and into these fixed cups, when the time came, Marie would

ladle the soup, giving each a wooden spoon from a queer rack in the middle; the kettle stood at one end; the big loaf lay at the other; and all would stand round eating out of their little troughs, with Nannette and a rough dog close by to receive any crusts that might be left.

Presently the mother came in, a true Breton woman, rosy and robust, neat and cheery, though her poor clothes were patched all over, her hands more rough and worn with hard work than any I ever saw, and the fine hair under her picturesque cap gray at thirty with much care.

I saw then where Marie got the brightness that seemed to shine in every feature of her little face, for the mother's coming was like a ray of sunshine in that dark place, and she had a friendly word and look for every one.

Our little arrangement was soon made, and we left them all smiling and nodding as if the few francs we were to pay would be a fortune to them.

Early next morning we were wakened by Françoise, the maid, who came up to announce that the goat's milk had arrived. Then we heard a queer, quick, tapping sound on the stairs, and to our great amusement, Nannette walked into the room, straight up to my bedside, and stood there looking

at me with her mild yellow eyes as if she was quite used to seeing nightcaps. Marie followed with a pretty little bowl in her hand, and said, laughing at our surprise, "See, dear mademoiselle; in this way I make sure that the milk is quite fresh and warm;" and kneeling down, she milked the bowl full in a twinkling, while Nannette quietly chewed her cud and sniffed at a plate of rolls on the table.

The warm draught was delicious, and we drank each our portion with much merriment.

"It is our custom," said Françoise, who stood by with arms folded and looked on in a lofty manner.

"What had you for your own breakfast?" I asked, as I caught Marie's eye hungrily fixed on the rolls and some tempting little cakes of chocolate left from our lunch the day before.

"My good bread, as usual, mademoiselle, also sorrel salad and — and water," answered Marie, as if trying to make the most of her scanty meal.

"Will you eat the rolls and put the chocolate in your pocket to nibble at school? You must be tired with this long walk so early."

She hesitated, but could not resist and said in a low tone, as she held the bread in her hand without eating it:

"Would mademoiselle be angry if I took it to Bebe? She has never tasted the beautiful white bread, and it would please her much."

I emptied the plate into her basket, tucked in the chocolate, and added a gay picture for baby, which unexpected treasures caused Marie to clasp her hands and turn quite red with delight.

After that she came daily, and we had merry times with old Nannette and her little mistress, whom we soon learned to love, so busy, blithe, and grateful was she.

We soon found a new way to employ her, for the boy who drove our donkey did not suit us, and we got the donkey woman to let us have Marie in the afternoon when her lessons were done. She liked that, and so did we; for she seemed to understand the nature of donkeys and could manage them without so much beating and shouting as the boy thought necessary. Such pleasant drives as we had, we two big women in the droll wagon, drawn by the little gray donkey that looked as if made of an old trunk, so rusty and rough was he as he went trotting along, his long ears wagging and his small hoofs clattering over the fine, hard road, while Marie sat on the shaft with a long whip, talking and laughing and giving

Andrè a poke now and then, crying "E! E! Houp la!" to make him go.

We found her a capital little guide and story-teller, for her grandmother had told her all the tales and legends of the neighborhood, and it was very pleasant to hear her repeat them in pretty peasant French as we sat among the ruins, while Kate sketched, I took notes, and Marie held the big parasol over us.

Some of these stories were charming, at least as *she* told them, with her little face changing from gay to sad as she gesticulated most dramatically.

The romance of "Gilles de Bretagne" was one of her favorites: how he carried off his child wife when she was only twelve; how he was imprisoned, and poisoned, and at last left to starve in a dungeon, and would stand at his window crying, "Bread, bread, for the love of God!" Yet no one dared to give him any, till a poor peasant woman went in the night and gave him half her black loaf. Not once, but every night, for six months, though she robbed her children to do it. And when he was dying, it was she who took a priest to him that he might confess through the bars of his cell.

"So good, ah, so good, this poor woman! It is beautiful to hear of that, mademoiselle," little

Marie would say, with her black eyes full and her lips trembling.

But the story she liked best of all was about the peasant girl and her grandmother.

"See then, dear ladies, it was in this way. In the time of the great war many poor people were shot because it was feared they would burn the châteaux. In one of these so sad parties being driven to St. Malo to be shot was this young girl. Only fifteen, dear ladies, behold how young is this! And see the brave thing she did! With her went the old grandmother whom she loved next the good God. They went slowly, she was so old, and one of the officers who guarded them had pity on the pretty girl and said to her as they were a little apart from the rest, 'Come, you are young and can run. I will save you; it is a pity so fine a little girl be shot.'

"Then she was glad and thanked him much, saying, 'And the grandmother also? You will save her with me?' 'It is impossible,' said the officer. 'She is too old to run. I can save but one, and her life is nearly over; let her go, and do you fly into the next wood. I will not betray you, and when we come up with the gang, it will be too late to find you.'

"Then the great temptation of Satan came to this girl. She had no wish to suffer, but she could not

leave the good old grandmere to die alone. She wept; she prayed; and the saints gave her courage.

" 'No, I will not go,' she said; and in the morning at St. Malo she was shot with the old mother in her arms."

"Could you do that for your grandmere?" I once asked, as she stopped for breath, because this tale always excited her. She crossed herself devoutly and answered with fire in her eyes and a resolute gesture of her little brown hands:

"I should try, madmoiselle."

I think she would, and succeed, too, for she was a brave and tender-hearted child, as she soon after proved.

A long drought parched the whole country that summer, and the gardens suffered much, especially the little plats in Lehon, for most of them were on the steep hillside behind the huts, and unless it rained, water had to be carried up from the stream below. The cabbages and onions on which these poor people depend, when fresh salads are gone, were dying in the baked earth, and a hard winter was before them if this little store failed.

The priests prayed in the churches for rain, and long processions streamed out of the gates to visit the old stone cross called the "Croix de Saint

Esprit", and kneeling there in crowds, the people implored the blessing of rain to save their harvest. We felt great pity for them, but liked little Marie's way of praying best.

She did not come one morning, but sent her brother, who only laughed and said Marie had hurt her foot, when we inquired for her. Anxious to know if she was really ill, we went to see her in the afternoon and heard a pretty little story of practical Christianity.

Marie lay asleep on her mother's bed in the wall, and her father, sitting by her, told the tale in a low voice, pausing now and then to look at her, as if his little daughter had done something to be proud of.

It seems that in the village there was an old woman, frightfully disfigured by fire and not quite sane, as the people thought. She was harmless, but never showed herself by day and only came out at night to work in her garden or take the air. Many of the ignorant peasants feared her, however, for the country abounds in fairy legends and strange tales of ghosts and goblins. But the more charitable left bread at her door and took in return the hose she knit or the thread she spun.

During the drought it was observed that *her* garden, though the steepest and stoniest, was never

dry, *her* cabbages flourished when her neighbors' withered, and *her* onions stood up green and tall as if some special rain spirit watched over them. People wondered and shook their heads, but could not explain it, for Mother Lobineau was too infirm to carry much water up the steep path, and who would help her unless some of her own goblin friends did it?

This idea was suggested by the story of a peasant returning late at night, who had seen something white flitting to and fro in the garden patch and when he called to it, saw it vanish most mysteriously. This made quite a stir in the town; others watched also, saw the white phantom in the starlight, and could not tell where it went when it vanished behind the chestnut trees on the hill, till one man, braver than the rest, hid himself behind these trees and discovered the mystery. The sprite was Marie, in her little shift, who stepped out of the window of the loft where she slept on to a bough of the tree, and thence to the hill, for the house was built so close against the bank that it was "but a step from garret to garden," as they say in Morlaix.

In trying to escape from this inquisitive neighbor, Marie hurt her foot, but was caught and confessed

that it was she who went at night to water poor Mother Lobineau's cabbages, because if they failed, the old woman might starve, and no one else remembered her destitute and helpless state.

The good-hearted people were much touched by this silent sermon on loving one's neighbor as one's self, and Marie was called the "little saint" and tended carefully by all the good women.

Just as the story ended, Marie woke up and at first seemed inclined to hide under the bedclothes. But we had her out in a minute, and presently she was laughing over her good deed, with a true child's enjoyment of a bit of roguery, saying in her simple way:

"Yes, it was so droll to go running about *en chemise*, like the girl in the tale of the 'Midsummer Eve,' where she pulls the Saint Johnswort flower and has her wish to hear all the creatures talk. I liked it much, and Yvon slept so like the dormouse that he never heard me creep in and out. It was hard to bring much water, but the poor cabbages were *so* glad, and Mother Lobineau felt that all had not forgotten her."

We took care that little Saint Marie was not forgotten. She was quite well and all ready for her confirmation when the day came. This is a pretty sight,

and for her sake we went to the old church of St. Sauveur to see it. It was a bright spring day, and the gardens were full of early flowers, the quaint streets gay with proud fathers and mothers in holiday dress and flocks of strangers pausing to see the long procession of little girls with white caps and veils, gloves and gowns, prayer books and rosaries, winding through the sunny square into the shadowy church with chanting, candles, garlands and crosses.

The old priest was too ill to perform the service, but the young one who took his place announced, after it was over, that if they would pass the house, the good old man would bless them from his balcony. That was the best of all, and a sweet sight, as the feeble, fatherly old priest leaned from his easy chair to stretch his trembling hands over the little flock, so like a bed of snowdrops, while the bright eyes and rosy faces looked reverently up at him and the fresh voices chanted the responses as the curly heads under the long veils bowed and passed by.

We learned afterward that our Marie had been called in and praised for her secret charity — a great honor, because the good priest was much beloved by all his flock and took a most paternal interest in the little ones.

That was almost the last we saw of our little friend, for we left Dinan soon after, bidding the Lehon family good-by and leaving certain warm souvenirs for winter time. Marie cried and clung to us at parting, then smiled like an April day, and waved her hand as we went away, never expecting to see her any more.

But the next morning, just as we were stepping on board the steamer to go down the Rance to St. Malo, we saw a little white cap come bobbing through the market place, down the steep street, and presently Marie appeared with two great bunches of pale yellow primroses and wild blue hyacinths in one hand, while the other held her sabots that she might run the faster. Rosy and smiling and breathless with haste she came racing up to us, crying:

"Behold my souvenir for the dear ladies. I do not cry now. No. I am glad the day is so fine. *Bon voyage! Bon voyage!*"

We thanked and kissed and left her on the shore, bravely trying not to cry, as she waved her wooden shoes and kissed her hand till we were out of sight and had nothing but the soft colors and sweet breath of our nosegays to remind us of Little Marie of Lehon.

ROSA'S TALE

Now, I believe every one has had a Christmas present and a good time. Nobody has been forgotten, not even the cat," said Mrs. Ward to her daughter, as she looked at Pobbylinda, purring on the rug, with a new ribbon round her neck and the remains of a chicken bone between her paws.

It was very late, for the Christmas tree was trimmed, the little folks abed, the baskets and bundles left at poor neighbors' doors, and everything ready for the happy day which would begin as the clock struck twelve. They were resting after their labors, while the yule log burned down; but the mother's words reminded Belinda of one good friend who had received no gift that night.

"We've forgotten Rosa! Her mistress is away, but she *shall* have a present nevertheless. Late as it is, she will like some apples and cake and a Merry Christmas from the family."

Belinda jumped up as she spoke, and having collected such remnants of the feast as a horse would relish, she put on her hood, lighted a lantern, and trotted off to the barn.

As she opened the door of the loose box in which Rosa was kept, she saw her eyes shining in the dark as she lifted her head with a startled air. Then, recognizing a friend, she rose and came rustling through the straw to greet her late visitor. She was evidently much pleased with the attention and rubbed her nose against Miss Belinda gratefully, but seemed rather dainty and poked over the contents of the basket, as if a little suspicious, though apples were her favorite treat.

Knowing that she would enjoy the little feast more if she had company while she ate it, for Rosa was a very social beast, Miss Belinda hung up the lantern and, sitting down on an inverted bucket, watched her as she munched contentedly.

"Now really," said Miss Belinda, when telling her story afterwards, "I am not sure whether I took a nap and dreamed what follows, or whether it actually happened, for strange things do occur at Christmas time, as everyone knows.

"As I sat there, the town clock struck twelve, and the sound reminded me of the legend which affirms that all dumb animals are endowed with speech for one hour after midnight on Christmas eve, in memory of the animals about the manger when the blessed Child was born.

" 'I wish the pretty fancy was a fact and our Rosa could speak, if only for an hour, because I am sure she has an interesting history, and I long to know it.'

"I said this aloud, and to my utter amazement the bay mare stopped eating, fixed her intelligent eyes upon my face, and answered in a language I understood perfectly well:

" 'You shall know it, for whether the legend is true or not, I feel as if I could confide in you and tell you all I feel. I was lying awake listening to the fun in the house, thinking of my dear mistress over the sea and feeling very sad, for I heard you say I was to be sold. That nearly broke my heart, for no one has ever been so kind to me as Miss Merry, and nowhere shall I be taken care of, nursed, and loved as I have been since she bought me. I know I am getting old, and stiff in the knees, and my forefoot is lame, and sometimes I'm cross when my shoulder aches; but I do try to be a patient, grateful beast. I've grown fat with good living; my work is not hard; I dearly love to carry those who have done so much for me; and I'll tug for them till I die in harness, if they will only keep me.'

"I was so astonished at this address that I tumbled off the pail, and sat among the straw staring up at

The mare answered in a language I understood.

Rosa as dumb as if I had lost the power she had gained. She seemed to enjoy my surprise and added to it by letting me hear a genuine *horse laugh*, hearty, shrill, and clear, as she shook her pretty head and went on talking rapidly in the language which I now perceived to be a mixture of English and the peculiar dialect of the horse country Gulliver visited.

" 'Thank you for remembering me to-night, and in return for the goodies you bring, I'll tell my story as fast as I can, for I have often longed to recount the trials and triumphs of my life. Miss Merry came last Christmas eve to bring me sugar, and I wanted to speak, but it was too early and I could not say a word, though my heart was full.'

"Rosa paused an instant, and her fine eyes dimmed as if with tender tears at the recollection of the happy year which had followed the day she was bought from the drudgery of a livery stable to be a lady's pet. I stroked her neck as she stooped to sniff affectionately at my hood, and said eagerly:

" 'Tell away, dear. I'm full of interest and understand every word you say.'

"Thus encouraged, Rosa threw up her head and began with an air of pride which plainly proved,

what we had always suspected, that she belonged to a good family.

" 'My father was a famous racer, and I am very like him; the same color, spirit, and grace, and but for the cruelty of man, I might have been as renowned as he. I was a very happy colt, petted by my master, tamed by love, and was never struck a blow while he lived. I gained one race for him and promised so well that when he died, I brought a great price. I mourned for him, but was glad to be sent to my new owner's racing stable and made much of, for people predicted that I should be another Goldsmith Maid or Flora Temple. Ah, how ambitious and proud I was in those days — vain of my good blood, my speed, and my beauty. For indeed I *was* handsome then, though you may find it hard to believe now.' And Rosa sighed regretfully as she stole a look at me, and took the attitude which showed to advantage the fine lines about her head and neck.

" 'I do not find it hard, for we have always said you had splendid points about you. Miss Merry saw them, though you were a skeleton when she bought you; so did the skilful Cornish blacksmith when he shod you. And it is easy to see that you belong to a good family by the way you hold your

head without a checkrein and carry your tail like a plume,' I said, with a look of admiration which comforted her as much as if she had been a *passée* belle.

" 'I must hurry over this part of my story, because, though brilliant, it was very brief and ended in a way which made it the bitterest portion of my life,' continued Rosa. 'I won several races, and great fame was predicted for me. You may guess how high my reputation was when I tell you that before my last fatal trial thousands were bet on me, and my rival trembled in his shoes. I was full of spirit, eager to show my speed, and sure of success. Alas, how little I knew of the wickedness of human nature then, how dearly I bought the knowledge, and how it has changed my whole life! You do not know much about such matters, of course, and I won't digress to tell you all the tricks of the trade; only beware of jockeys and never bet.

" 'I was kept carefully out of every one's way for weeks, and only taken out for exercise by my trainer. Poor Bill! I was fond of him, and he was so good to me that I never have forgotten him, though he broke his neck years ago. A few nights before the great race, as I was getting a good sleep, carefully tucked away in my roomy stall, some one stole in and gave

me a warm mash. It was dark; I was half awake, and I ate it like a fool, though I knew by instinct that it was not Bill who fed it to me. I was a confiding creature then, and as all sorts of queer things had been done to prepare me, I thought it was all right. But it was not, and that deceit has caused me to be suspicious about my food ever since, for the mash was dosed in some way; it made me very ill, and my enemies nearly triumphed, thanks to this cowardly trick.

" 'Bill worked over me day and night, that I might be fit to run. I did my best to seem well and gay, but there was not time for me to regain my lost strength and spirit, and pride alone kept me up. "I'll win for my master if I die in doing it," I said to myself, and when the hour came, pranced to my place trying to look as well as ever, though my heart was very heavy and I trembled with excitement. "Courage, my lass, and we'll beat in spite of their black tricks," whispered Bill, as he sprung to his place.

" 'I lost the first heat but won the second, and the sound of the cheering gave me strength to walk away without staggering, though my legs shook under me. What a splendid minute that was when, encouraged and refreshed by my faithful Bill, I

came on the track again! I knew my enemies began to fear, for I had borne myself so bravely they fancied I was quite well, and now, excited by that first success, I was mad with impatience to be off and cover myself with glory.'

" 'I wish I had been there to see you!' I exclaimed, quite carried away by her ardor.

"Rosa looked as if the 'splendid minute' had come again, for she arched her neck, opened wide her red nostrils, and pawed the straw with one little foot, while her eyes shone with sudden fire, and her ears were pricked up as if to catch again the shouts she heard that day.

" 'I wish you had, for I won! I won! The big black horse did his best, but I had vowed to win or die, and I kept my word, for I beat him by a head, and then dropped as if dead. I might as well have died then, people thought, for the poison, the exertion, and the fall ruined me for a racer. My master cared no more for me and would have had me shot if Bill had not saved my life. I was pronounced good for nothing, and he bought me cheap. I was lame and useless for a long time, but his patient care did wonders, and just as I was able to be of use to him, he was killed.

" 'A gentleman in want of a saddle horse pur-

chased me because my easy gait and quiet temper suited him; for I was meek enough now, and my size fitted me to carry his delicate daughter.

" 'For more than a year I served little Miss Alice, rejoicing to see how rosy her pale cheeks became, how upright her feeble figure grew, thanks to the hours spent with me; for my canter rocked her as gently as if she were in a cradle, and fresh air was the medicine she needed. She often said she owed her life to me, and I liked to think so, for she made *my* life a very easy one.

" 'But somehow my good times never lasted long, and when Miss Alice went West, I was sold. I had been so well treated that I *looked* as handsome and gay as ever, though my shoulder never was strong again and I often had despondent moods, longing for the excitement of the race course with the instinct of my kind; so I was glad when, attracted by my spirit and beauty, a young army officer bought me and I went to the war. Ah! you never guessed that, did you? Yes, I did my part gallantly and saved my master's life more than once. You have observed how martial music delights me, but you don't know that it is because it reminds me of the proudest hour of my life. I've told you about the saddest; let me relate this also, and give me a pat

for the brave action which won my master his promotion, though I got no praise for my part of the achievement.

" 'In one of the hottest battles my captain was ordered to lead his men to a most perilous exploit. They hesitated; so did he, for it must cost many lives, and brave as they were, they paused an instant. But *I* settled the point, for I was wild with the sound of drums, the smell of powder, the excitement of the hour, and finding myself sharply reined in, I rebelled, took the bit between my teeth, and dashed straight away into the midst of the fight, in spite of all my rider could do. The men thought their captain led them on, and with a cheer they followed, carrying all before them.

" 'What happened just after that I never could remember, except that I got a wound here in my neck and a cut on my flank; the scar is there still, and I'm proud of it, though buyers always consider it a blemish. But when the battle was won, my master was promoted on the field, and I carried him up to the general as he sat among his officers under the torn flags.

" 'Both of us were weary and wounded; both were full of pride at what we had done; but *he* got all the praise and the honor, *I* only a careless word and a better supper than usual.

" 'I thought no one knew what I had done and resented the ingratitude of your race; for it was the horse, not the man, who led that forlorn hope, and I did think I should have a rosette at least, when others got stars and bars for far less dangerous deeds. Never mind, my master knew the truth and thanked me for my help by keeping me always with him till the sad day when he was shot in a skirmish and lay for hours with none to watch and mourn over him but his faithful horse.

" 'Then I knew how much he loved and thanked me, for his hand stroked me while it had the strength, his eye turned to me till it grew too dim for seeing, and when help came, among the last words he whispered to a comrade were these, "Be kind to Rosa and send her safely home; she has earned her rest."

" 'I *had* earned it, but I did not get it, for when I was sent home, the old mother's heart was broken at the loss of her son, and she did not live long to cherish me. Then my hard times began, for my next owner was a fast young man, who ill-used me in many ways, till the spirit of my father rose within me, and I gave my brutal master a grand runaway and smash-up.

" 'To tame me down, I was sold for a car horse; and that almost killed me, for it was dreadful drudg-

ery to tug, day after day, over the hard pavement with heavy loads behind me, uncongenial companions beside me, and no affection to cheer my life.

" 'I have often longed to ask why Mr. Bergh does not try to prevent such crowds from piling into those cars; and now I beg you to do what you can to stop such an unmerciful abuse.

" 'In snowstorms it was awful, and more than one of my mates dropped dead with overwork and discouragement. I used to wish I could do the same, for my poor feet, badly shod, became so lame I could hardly walk at times, and the constant strain on the up grades brought back the old trouble in my shoulder worse than ever.

" 'Why they did not kill me, I don't know, for I was a miserable creature then; but there must be something attractive about me, I fancy, for people always seem to think me worth saving. What can it be, Miss Belinda?'

" 'Now, Rosa, don't be affected; you know you are a very engaging little animal, and if you live to be forty, will still have certain pretty ways about you that win the hearts of women, if not of men. *They* see your weak points and take a money view of the case; but *we* sympathize with your afflictions, are amused with your coquettish airs, and like your

affectionate nature. Now hurry up and finish, for I find it a trifle cold out here.'

"I laughed as I spoke, for Rosa eyed me with a sidelong glance and gently waved the docked tail, which was her delight; for the sly thing liked to be flattered and was as fond of compliments as a girl.

" 'Many thanks. I will come now to the most interesting portion of my narrative. As I was saying, instead of knocking me on the head, I was packed off to New Hampshire and had a fine rest among the green hills, with a dozen or so of weary friends. It was during this holiday that I acquired the love of nature which Miss Merry detected and liked in me, when she found me ready to study sunsets with her, to admire new landscapes, and enjoy bright summer weather.

" 'In the autumn a livery-stable keeper bought me and through the winter fed me up till I was quite presentable in the spring. It was a small town, but through the summer many city people visited there, so I was kept on the trot while the season lasted, because ladies could drive me. You, Miss Belinda, were one of the ladies, and I never shall forget, though I have long ago forgiven it, how you laughed at my queer gait the day you hired me.

" 'My tender feet and stiff knees made me tread

very gingerly and amble along with short mincing steps, which contrasted oddly, I know, with my proudly waving tail and high-carried head. You liked me, nevertheless, because I didn't rattle you down the steep hills, was not afraid of locomotives, and stood patiently while you gathered flowers and enjoyed the lovely prospects.

"I have always felt a regard for you since you did not whip me, and admired my eyes, which, I may say without vanity, have always been considered unusually fine. But no one ever won my whole heart like Miss Merry, and I never shall forget the happy day when she came to the stable to order a saddle horse. Her cheery voice made me prick up my ears, and when she said, after looking at several showy beasts, "No, they don't suit me. This one now has the right air; can I ride her?" my heart danced within me and I looked round with a whinny of delight. She understood my welcome, and came right up to me, patted me, peered into my face, rubbed my nose, and looked at my feet with an air of interest and sympathy, that made me feel as if I'd like to carry her round the world.

" 'Ah, what rides we had after that! What happy hours trotting gayly through the green woods, galloping over the breezy hills, or pacing slowly along

quiet lanes, where I often lunched luxuriously on clover tops, while Miss Merry took a sketch of some picturesque bit with me in the foreground.

" 'I liked that, and we had long chats at such times, for she seemed to understand me perfectly. She was never frightened when I danced for pleasure on the soft turf, never chid me when I snatched a bite from the young trees as we passed through sylvan ways, never thought it a trouble to let me wet my tired feet in babbling brooks, or to dismount and take out the stones that plagued me.

" 'Then how well she rode! So firm yet light a seat, so steady a hand, so agile a foot to spring on and off, and such infectious spirits, that no matter how despondent or cross I might be, in five minutes I felt gay and young again when dear Miss Merry was on my back.'

" Here Rosa gave a frisk that sent the straw flying and made me shrink into a corner, while she pranced about the box with a neigh which waked the big brown colt next door and set poor Buttercup to lowing for her calf, the loss of which she had forgotten for a little while in sleep.

" 'Ah, Miss Merry never ran away from me! She knew my heels were to be trusted, and she let me caper as I would, glad to see me lively. Never mind,

Miss Belinda, come out and I'll be sober, as befits my years,' laughed Rosa, composing herself, and adding, so like a woman that I could not help smiling in the dark:

" 'When I say "years", I beg you to understand that I am *not* as old as that base man declared, but just in the prime of life for a horse. Hard usage has made me seem old before my time, and I am good for years of service yet.'

" 'Few people have been through as much as you have, Rosa, and you certainly *have* earned the right to rest,' I said consolingly, for her little whims and vanities amused me much.

" 'You know what happened next,' she continued. 'But I must seize this opportunity to express my thanks for all the kindness I've received since Miss Merry bought me, in spite of the ridicule and dissuasion of all her friends.

" 'I know I didn't look like a good bargain, for I *was* very thin and lame and shabby; but she saw and loved the willing spirit in me, pitied my hard lot, and felt that it would be a good deed to buy me even if she never got much work out of me.

" 'I shall always remember that, and whatever happens to me hereafter, I never shall be as proud again as I was the day she put my new saddle and

bridle on, and I was led out, sleek, plump, and handsome, with blue rosettes at my ears, my tail cut in the English style, and on my back Miss Merry in her London hat and habit, all ready to head a cavalcade of eighteen horsemen and horsewomen. *We* were the most perfect pair of all, and when the troop caracoled down the wide street six abreast, *my* head was the highest, *my* rider the straightest, and *our* two hearts the friendliest in all the goodly company.

" 'Nor is it pride and love alone that binds me to her; it is gratitude as well, for did not she often bathe my feet herself, rub me down, water me, blanket me, and daily come to see me when I was here alone for weeks in the winter time? Didn't she study horses' feet and shoes, that I might be cured if possible? Didn't she write to the famous friend of my race for advice and drive me seven miles to get a good smith to shoe me well? Have not my poor contracted feet grown much better, thanks to the weeks of rest without shoes which she gave me? Am I not fat and handsome, and barring the stiff knees, a very presentable horse? If I am, it is all owing to her; and for that reason I want to live and die in her service.

" '*She* doesn't want to sell me and only bade you

do it because you didn't want the care of me while she is gone. Dear Miss Belinda, please keep me! I'll eat as little as I can. I won't ask for a new blanket, though your old army one is very thin and shabby. I'll trot for you all winter and try not to show it if I am lame. I'll do anything a horse can, no matter how humble, to earn my living, only don't, pray don't send me away among strangers who have neither interest nor pity for me!'

"Rosa had spoken rapidly, feeling that her plea must be made now or never, for before another Christmas she might be far away and speech of no use to win her wish. I was much touched, though she was only a horse; for she was looking earnestly at me as she spoke and made the last words very eloquent by preparing to bend her stiff knees and lie down at my feet. I stopped her, and answered, with an arm about her neck and her soft nose in my hand:

" 'You shall *not* be sold, Rosa! You shall go and board at Mr. Town's great stable, where you will have pleasant society among the eighty horses who usually pass the winter there. Your shoes shall be taken off, and you shall rest till March at least. The best care will be taken of you, dear, and I will come and see you; and in the spring you shall re-

turn to us, even if Miss Merry is not here to welcome you.'

" 'Thanks, many, many thanks! But I wish I could do something to earn my board. I hate to be idle, though rest *is* delicious. Is there nothing I can do to repay you, Miss Belinda? Please answer quickly, for I know the hour is almost over,' cried Rosa, stamping with anxiety; for, like all her sex, she wanted the last word.

" 'Yes, you can,' I cried, as a sudden idea popped into my head. 'I'll write down what you have told me and send the little story to a certain paper I know of, and the money I get for it will pay your board. So rest in peace, my dear; you *will* have earned your living and may feel that your debt is paid.'

"Before she could reply the clock struck one, and a long sigh of satisfaction was all the response in her power. But we understood each other now, and cutting a lock from her mane for Miss Merry, I gave Rosa a farewell caress and went away, wondering if I had made it all up, or if she had really broken a year's silence and freed her mind.

"However that may be, here is the tale, and the sequel to it is that the bay mare has gone to board at a first-class stable," concluded Miss Belinda.

"I call occasionally and leave my card in the shape of an apple, finding Madam Rosa living like an independent lady, with her large box and private yard on the sunny side of the barn, a kind ostler to wait upon her, and much genteel society from the city when she is inclined for company.

"What more could any reasonable horse desire?"

DANDELION

Down by the sea lived Ben, the fisherman, with his wife and little son who was called Dandelion, because he wore yellow pinafores and had curly, yellow hair that covered his head with a golden fuzz. A very happy family, for Ben was kind and industrious, Hetty, his wife, a cheerful, busy creature, and Dandelion the jolliest three-year-old baby who ever made sand pies and paddled on the beach.

But one day a great trouble came to them. Ben and his fellow fishermen sailed blithely away as usual, and Hetty watched the fleet of white-winged boats out of the bay, thinking how pretty they looked with the sunshine on them, while Dandelion stood clapping his chubby hands, and saying, as he always did, "Daddy tummin' soon." But Daddy did not come soon that time, for a great storm arose, and when some of the boats came scudding home at nightfall, Ben's was not among them. All night the gale raged, and in the morning Ben's boat lay empty and broken on the shore. His mates shook their heads when they saw the wreck and drew their

rough hands over their eyes, for Ben was a good seaman, and they knew he never would desert his boat alive. They looked for him far and wide, but could hear nothing of him and felt sure that he had perished in the storm. They tried to comfort poor Hetty, but she would not be comforted. Her heart seemed broken; and if it had not been for her baby, her neighbors feared that she would have gone to join Ben in his grave under the sea. Dandelion didn't understand why every one was so sad, and why his father stayed away so long; but he never lost his cheerfulness, never gave up hoping or stopped saying, with a contented smile, "Daddy tummin' soon." The sunshiny little face was Hetty's only comfort. The sight of the fuzzy yellow head, bobbing round the house, alone made it endurable; and the touch of the loving baby hands kept her from the despair which made her long to end her sorrow in the sea.

People don't believe in fairies nowadays; nevertheless, good spirits still exist and help us in our times of trouble, better even than the little people we used to read about. One of these household spirits is called Love, and it took the shape of Dandelion, to comfort poor Hetty. Another is called Labor. A beautiful, happy spirit this is, and it did

its part so well that there was little time for bitter thoughts or vain regrets, for Hetty's spinning wheel must go, in order to earn bread for Dandelion, whose mouth was always ready for food, like a hungry bird's. Busily hummed the wheel; and, as it flew, it seemed to catch an echo of the baby's cheerful song, saying over and over, "Daddy tummin' soon," till Hetty stopped crying as she worked and listened to the cheerful whirr. "Yes, I shall see my good Ben again, if I wait patiently. Baby takes comfort in saying that, and I will, too, though the poor dear will get tired of it soon," she said.

But Dandelion didn't get tired. He firmly believed what he said, and nothing could change his mind. He had been much troubled at seeing the boat laid up on the beach, all broken and dismantled, but his little mind couldn't take in the idea of shipwreck and death; so, after thinking it over, he decided that Daddy was waiting somewhere for a new boat to be sent to bring him home. This idea was so strong that the child gathered together his store of toy boats — for he had many, as they were his favorite plaything — and launched them, one after another, telling them to find his father, and bring him home.

As Dandelion was not allowed to play on the

beach except at low tide, the little boats sailed safely away on the receding waves, and the child was sure that some of them would get safely into the distant port where Daddy was waiting. All the boats were launched at last; all sailed bravely away; but none came back, and little Dandy was much disappointed. He babbled about it to himself, told the peeps and the horseshoes, the snails and the lobsters, of his trouble, begged the gulls to fly away and find Daddy; and every windy night, when the sea dashed on the shore and the shutters rattled, he would want the lamp put in the window, as it used to be when they expected Ben and tried to make home look cheerful, even before he got there.

Hetty used to humor the child, though it made her heart ache to know that the light shone in vain. At such times Dandy would prance about the room in his little shirt and talk about Daddy as happily as if long months had not passed without bringing him back. When fairly in his big, old-fashioned cradle, the boy would lie, looking more like a dandelion than ever, in his yellow flannel nightgown, playing with his toes, or rocking himself to and fro, calling the cradle his boat, and blithely telling his mother that he was sailing "far way to find Daddy." When tired of play, he lay still and asked her to

sing to him. She had no heart for the gay old sea songs she used to sing for lullabies; so she sung hymns in her soft, motherly voice, till the blue eyes closed and the golden head lay still, looking so

pretty with the circle of bright hair above the rosy face. "My little saint," Hetty called him; and though she often wept sadly as she watched him, the bitterness of her grief passed away and a patient hope came to her; for the child's firm faith impressed her deeply, the pious music of the sweet old

hymns comforted her sore heart, and daily labor kept her cheerful, in spite of herself. The neighbors wondered at the change that came over her, but she could not explain it; and no one knew that the three good spirits, called Love, Labor, and Hope, were working their pleasant miracles.

Six long months went by, and no one ever thought of seeing Ben again — no one but his little son, who still watched for him here, and his wife, who waited to meet him hereafter.

One bright spring day something happened. The house was as tidy as ever; the wheel hummed briskly as Hetty sung softly to herself with a cheerful face, though there were white hairs among the brown, and her eyes had a thoughtful, absent look at times. Dandelion, more chubby and cheery than ever, sat at her feet, with the sunshine making a golden glory of his yellow hair, as he tried his new boat in the tub of water his mother kept for her little sailor, or tugged away with his fat fingers at a big needle which he was trying to pull through a bit of cloth intended for a sail. The faithful little soul had not forgotten his father, but had come to the conclusion that the reason his boats never prospered was because they hadn't large enough sails; so he was intent on rigging a new boat lately given

him, with a sail that could not fail to waft Ben safely home. With his mouth puckered up, his downy eyebrows knit, and both hands pulling at the big needle, he was so wrapped in his work that he did not mind the stopping of the wheel when Hetty fell into a reverie, thinking of the happy time when she and Ben should meet again. Sitting so, neither heard a step come softly over the sand; neither saw an eager, brown face peer in at the door; and neither knew, for a minute, that Ben was watching them, with a love and longing in his heart that made him tremble like a woman.

Dandelion saw him first; for, as he pulled the thread through with a triumphant jerk, the small sailmaker lost his balance, tumbled over, and lay staring up at the tall man with his blue eyes so wide open that they looked as if they would never shut again. All of a sudden, he shouted, with a joyful shout, "Daddy's tummin'!" and the next instant, vanished, ship and all, in the arms of the man who wore the rough jacket. Over went the spinning-wheel, as Hetty vanished likewise; and for a time there was nothing but sobbing and kissing, clinging and thanking Heaven for its kindness to them. When they grew quieter and Ben got into his old chair, with his wife on one knee and his boy on the

other, he told them how he was wrecked in the gale, picked up by an outward-bound ship, and only able to get back after months of sickness and delay.

"My boaty fetched him," said Dandelion, feeling that everything had turned out just as he expected.

"So it did, my precious; leastways, your faith helped, I haven't a doubt," cried Hetty, hugging the curly-headed prophet close, as she told Ben all that had happened.

Ben didn't say much, but a few great tears rolled down the rough blue jacket, as he looked from the queer sail with its two big stitches to the little son, whose love, he firmly believed, had kept him safe through many dangers and brought him home at last.

When the fine new boat was built, no one thought it strange that Ben named it "Dandelion"; no one laughed at the little sail which always hung over the fireplace in the small house; and long years after, when Ben was an old man and sat by the door with his grandchildren on his knee, the story which always pleased them best was that which ended with the funny words, "Daddy tummin' soon."

HOW THEY CAMPED OUT

"It looks so much like snow I think it would be wiser to put off your sleighing party, Gwen," said Mrs. Arnold, looking anxiously out at the heavy sky and streets still drifted by the last winter storm.

"Not before night, mamma; we don't mind its being cloudy; we like it, because the sun makes the snow so dazzling when we get out of town. We can't give it up now, for here comes Patrick with the boys." And Gwen ran down to welcome the big sleigh, which just then drove up with four jolly lads skirmishing about inside.

"Come on!" called Mark, her brother, knocking his friends right and left, to make room for the four girls who were to complete the party.

"What do you think of the weather, Patrick?" asked Mrs. Arnold from the window, still undecided about the wisdom of letting her flock go off alone, papa having been called away after the plan was made.

"Faith, ma'm, it's an illigant day barring the

wind, that's a thrifle cowld to the nose. I'll have me eye on the childer, ma'm, and there'll be no throuble at all, at all," replied the old coachman, lifting a round red face out of his muffler and patting little Gus on the shoulder, as he sat proudly on the high seat holding the whip.

"Be careful, dears, and come home early."

With which parting caution mamma shut the window and watched the young folks drive gayly away, little dreaming what would happen before they got back.

The wind was more than a "thrifle cowld", for when they got out of the city, it blew across the open country in bitter blasts and made the eight little noses almost as red as that of old Pat, who had been up all night at a wake and was still heavy headed, though no one suspected it.

The lads enjoyed themselves immensely snowballing one another, for the drifts were still fresh enough to furnish soft snow, and Mark, Bob, and Tony had many a friendly tussle in it as they went up hills or paused to breathe the horses after a swift trot along a level bit of road. Little Gus helped drive till his hands were benumbed in spite of the new red mittens and he had to descend among the girls, who were cuddled cosily under the warm

robes, telling secrets, eating candy, and laughing at the older boys' pranks.

Sixteen-year-old Gwendoline was matron of the party and kept excellent order among the girls; for

Ruth and Alice were nearly her own age, and Rita a most obedient younger sister.

"I say, Gwen, we are going to stop at the old house on the way home and get some nuts for this evening. Papa said we might, and some of the big Baldwins, too. I have baskets, and while we fel-

lows fill them, you girls can look round the house," said Mark, when the exhausted young gentlemen returned to their seats.

"That will be nice. I want to get some books, and Rita has been very anxious about one of her dolls, which she is sure was left in the nursery closet. If we are going to stop, we ought to be turning back, Pat, for it is beginning to snow and will be dark early," answered Gwen, suddenly realizing that great flakes were fast whitening the roads and the wind had risen to a gale.

"Shure and I will, Miss dear, as soons as iver I can; but it's round a good bit we must go, for I couldn't be turning here widout upsettin' the whole of yez, it's that drifted. Rest aisy, and I'll fetch up at the owld place in half an hour, plaze the powers," said Pat, who had lost his way and wouldn't own it.

On they went again, with the wind at their backs, caring little for the snow that now fell fast, or the gathering twilight, since they were going toward home, they thought. It was a very long half hour before Pat brought them to the country house, which was shut up for the winter. With difficulty they ploughed their way up to the steps and scrambled on to the piazza, where they danced about to

warm their feet till Mark unlocked the door and let them in, leaving Pat to enjoy a doze on his seat.

"Make haste, boys; it is cold and dark here, and we must get home. Mamma will be so anxious, and it really is going to be a bad storm," said Gwen, whose spirits were damped by the gloom of the old house and who felt her responsibility, having promised to be home early.

Off went the boys to attic and cellar, being obliged to light the lantern left here for the use of whoever came now and then to inspect the premises. The girls, having found books and doll, sat upon the rolled-up carpets, or peeped about at the once gay and hospitable rooms, now looking very empty and desolate with piled-up furniture, shuttered windows, and fireless hearths.

"If we were going to stay long, I'd have a fire in the library. Papa often does when he comes out, to keep the books from moulding," began Gwen, but was interrupted by a shout from without and, running to the door, saw Pat picking himself out of a drift while the horses were galloping down the avenue at full speed.

"Be jabbers, them villains give a jump when that fallin' branch struck 'em, and out I wint, bein' tuk unknownst, just thinkin' of me poor cousin Mike.

May his bed above be aisy the day! Whisht now, Miss dear! I'll fetch 'em back in a jiffy. Stop still till I come and kape them b'ys quiet."

With a blow to settle his hat, Patrick trotted gallantly away into the storm, and the girls went in to tell the exciting news to the lads, who came whooping back from their search, with baskets of nuts and apples.

"Here's a go!" cried Mark. "Old Pat will run halfway to town before he catches the horses, and we are in for an hour or two at least."

"Then do make a fire, for we shall die of cold if we have to wait long," begged Gwen, rubbing Rita's cold hands and looking anxiously at little Gus, who was about making up his mind to roar.

"So we will, and be jolly till the blunderbuss gets back. Camp down, girls, and you fellows, come and hold the lantern while I get wood and stuff. It is so confoundedly dark, I shall break my neck down the shed steps." And Mark led the way to the library where the carpet still remained and comfortable chairs and sofas invited the chilly visitors to rest.

"How can you light your fire when you get the wood?" asked Ruth, a practical damsel, who looked well after her own creature comforts and was longing for a warm supper.

"Papa hides the matches in a tin box, so the rats won't get at them. Here they are, and two or three bits of candle for the sticks on the chimney piece, if he forgets to have the lantern trimmed. Now we will light up and look cozy when the boys come back."

And producing the box from under a sofa cushion, Gwen cheered the hearts of all by lighting two candles, rolling up the chairs, and making ready to be comfortable. Thoughtful Alice went to see if Pat was returning, and found a buffalo robe lying on the steps. Returning with this, she reported that there was no sign of the runaways and advised making ready for a long stay.

"How mamma will worry!" thought Gwen, but made light of the affair, because she saw Rita looked timid and Gus shivered till his teeth chattered.

"We will have a nice time and play we are shipwrecked people or Arctic explorers. Here comes Dr. Kane and the sailors with supplies of wood, so we can thaw our pemmican and warm our feet. Gus shall be the little Esquimau boy, all dressed in fur, as he is in the picture we have at home," she said, wrapping the child in the robe and putting her own sealskin cap on his head to divert his mind.

"Here we are! Now for a jolly blaze, boys; and if

Pat doesn't come back, we can have our fun here instead of at home," cried Mark, well pleased with the adventure, as were his mates.

So they fell to work, and soon a bright fire was lighting up the room with its cheerful shine, and the children gathered about it, quite careless of the storm raging without and sure that Pat would come in time.

"I'm hungry," complained Gus, as soon as he was warm.

"So am I," added Rita from the rug, where the two little ones sat toasting themselves.

"Eat an apple," said Mark.

"They are so hard and cold I don't like them," began Gus.

"Roast some!" cried Ruth.

"And crack nuts," suggested Alice.

"Pity we can't cook something in real camp style; it would be such fun," said Tony, who had spent weeks on Monadnock, living on the supplies he and his party tugged up the mountain on their backs.

"We shall not have time for anything but what we have. Put down your apples and crack away, or we shall be obliged to leave them," advised Gwen, coming back from an observation at the front door with an anxious line on her forehead; for the storm

was rapidly increasing, and there was no sign of Pat or the horses.

The rest were in high glee, and an hour or two slipped quickly away as they enjoyed the impromptu feast and played games. Gus recalled them to the discomforts of their situation by saying with a yawn and a whimper:

"I'm so sleepy! I want my own bed and mamma."

"So do I!" echoed Rita, who had been nodding for some time and longed to lie down and sleep comfortably anywhere.

"Almost eight o'clock! By Jove, that old Pat *is* taking his time, I think. Wonder if he has got into trouble? We can't do anything and may as well keep quiet here," said Mark, looking at his watch and beginning to understand that the joke was rather a serious one.

"Better make a night of it and all go to sleep. Pat can wake us up when he comes. The cold makes a fellow *so* drowsy." And Bob gave a stretch that nearly rent him asunder.

"I will let the children nap on the sofa. They are so tired of waiting and may as well amuse themselves in that way as in fretting. Come, Gus and Rita, each take a pillow, and I'll cover you up with my shawl."

Gwen made the little ones comfortable, and they were off in five minutes. The others kept up bravely till nine o'clock; then the bits of candles were burnt out, the stories all told, nuts and apples had lost their charm, and weariness and hunger caused spirits to fail perceptibly.

"I've eaten five Baldwins, and yet I want more. Something filling and good. Can't we catch a rat and roast him?" proposed Bob, who was a hearty lad and was ravenous by this time.

"Isn't there anything in the house?" asked Ruth, who dared not eat nuts for fear of indigestion.

"Not a thing that I know of except a few pickles in the storeroom; we had so many, mamma left some here," answered Gwen, resolving to provision the house before she left it another autumn.

"Pickles alone are rather sour feed. If we only had a biscuit now, they wouldn't be bad for a relish," said Tony, with the air of a man who had known what it was to live on burnt bean soup and rye flapjacks for a week.

"I saw a keg of soft soap in the shed. How would that go with the pickles?" suggested Bob, who felt equal to the biggest and acidest cucumber ever grown.

"Mamma knew an old lady who actually did eat soft soap and cream for her complexion," put in Alice, whose own fresh face looked as if she had tried the same distasteful remedy with success.

The boys laughed, and Mark, who felt that hospitality required him to do something for his guests, said briskly:

"Let us go on a foraging expedition while the lamp holds out to burn, for the old lantern is almost gone and then we are done for. Come on, Bob; your sharp nose will smell out food if there is any."

"Don't set the house afire, and bring more wood when you come, for we must have light of some kind in this poky place," called Gwen, with a sigh, wishing every one of them were safely at home and abed.

A great tramping of boots, slamming of doors, and shouting of voices followed the departure of the boys, as well as a crash, a howl, and then a roar of laughter, as Bob fell down the cellar stairs, having opened the door in search of food and poked his nose in too far. Presently they came back, very dusty, cobwebby, and cold, but triumphantly bearing a droll collection of trophies. Mark had a piece of board and the lantern, Tony a big wooden box

and a tin pail, Bob fondly embraced a pickle jar and a tumbler of jelly which had been forgotten on a high shelf in the storeroom.

"Meal, pickles, jam, and boards. What a mess and what are we to do with it all?" cried the girls, much amused at the result of the expedition.

"Can any of you make a hoe cake?" demanded Mark.

"No, indeed! I can make caramels and cocoanut-cakes," said Ruth, proudly.

"I can make good toast and tea," added Alice.

"I can't cook anything," confessed Gwen, who was unusually accomplished in French, German, and music.

"Girls aren't worth much in the hour of need. Take hold, Tony; you are the chap for me." And Mark disrespectfully turned his back on the young ladies, who could only sit and watch the lads work.

"He can't do it without water," whispered Ruth.

"Or salt," answered Alice.

"Or a pan to bake it in," added Gwen; and then all smiled at the dilemma they foresaw.

But Tony was equal to the occasion and calmly went on with his task, while Mark arranged the fire and Bob opened the pickles. First the new cook filled the pail with snow till enough was melted to

wet the meal; this mixture was stirred with a pine stick till thick enough, then spread on the board and set up before the bed of coals to brown.

"It never will bake in the world." "He can't turn it, so it won't be done on both sides." "Won't be fit to eat any way!" And with these dark hints the girls consoled themselves for their want of skill.

But the cake did bake a nice brown; Tony did turn it neatly with his jackknife and the stick, and when it was done, cut it into bits, added jelly, and passed it round on an old atlas; and every one said:

"It really does taste good!"

Two more were baked, and eaten with pickles for a change; then all were satisfied, and after a vote of thanks to Tony, they began to think of sleep.

"Pat has gone home and told them we are all right, and mamma knows we can manage here well enough for one night, so don't worry, Gwen, but take a nap, and I'll lie on the rug and see to the fire."

Mark's happy-go-lucky way of taking things did not convince his sister; but as she could do nothing, she submitted and made her friends as comfortable as she could.

All had plenty of wraps, so the girls nestled into

the three large chairs; Bob and Tony rolled themselves up in the robe, with their feet to the fire, and were soon snoring like weary hunters. Mark pillowed his head on a log and was sound asleep in ten minutes, in spite of his promise to be sentinel.

Gwen's chair was the least easy of the three, and she could not forget herself like the rest, but sat wide awake, watching the blaze, counting the hours, and wondering why no one came to them.

The wind blew fiercely; the snow beat against the blinds; rats scuttled about the walls; and now and then a branch fell upon the roof with a crash. Weary, yet excited, the poor girl imagined all sorts of mishaps to Pat and the horses, recalled various ghost stories she had heard, and wondered if it was on such a night as this that a neighbor's house had been robbed. So nervous did she get at last that she covered up her face and resolutely began to count a thousand, feeling that anything was better than having to wake Mark and own she was frightened.

Before she knew it, she fell into a drowse and dreamed that they were all cast away on an iceberg and a polar bear was coming up to devour Gus, who innocently called to the big white dog and waited to caress him.

"A bear! A bear! Oh, boys, save him!" murmured Gwen in her sleep, and the sound of her own distressed voice waked her.

The fire was nearly out, for she had slept longer than she knew; the room was full of shadows; and the storm seemed to have died away. In the silence which now reigned, unbroken even by a snore, Gwen heard a sound that made her start and tremble. Some one was coming softly up the back stairs. All the outer doors were locked, she was sure; all the boys lay in their places, for she could see and count the three long figures and little Gus in a bunch on the sofa. The girls had not stirred, and this was no rat's scamper, but a slow and careful tread, stealing nearer and nearer to the study door, left ajar when the last load of wood was brought in.

"Pat would knock or ring, and papa would speak, so that we might not be scared. I want to scream, but I won't till I see that it really is some one," thought Gwen, while her heart beat fast and her eyes were fixed on the door, straining to see through the gloom.

The steps drew nearer, paused on the threshold, and then a head appeared, as the door noiselessly swung wider open — a man's head in a fur cap, but it was neither papa nor Pat nor Uncle Ed. Poor

Gwen would have called out then, but her voice was gone, and she could only lie back, looking, mute and motionless. A tiny spire of flame sprung up and flickered for a moment on the tall, dark figure in the doorway, a big man with a beard, and in his hand something that glittered. Was it a pistol or a dagger or a dark lantern, thought the girl, as the glimmer died away and the shadows returned to terrify her.

The man seemed to look about him keenly for a moment, then vanished, and the steps went down the hall to the front door, which was opened from within and some one admitted quietly. Whispers were heard, and then feet approached again, accompanied by a gleam of light.

"Now I must scream!" thought Gwen; and scream she did with all her might, as two men entered, one carrying a lantern, the other a bright tin can.

"Boys! Robbers! Fire! Tramps! Oh, do wake up!" cried Gwen, frantically pulling Mark by the hair and Bob and Tony by the legs, as the quickest way of rousing them.

Then there was a scene! The boys sprang up and rubbed their eyes; the girls hid theirs and began to shriek, while the burglars laughed aloud, and poor Gwen, quite worn out, fainted away on the rug. It

was all over in a minute, however, for Mark had his wits about him, and his first glance at the man with the lantern allayed his fears.

"Hullo, Uncle Ed! We are all right. Got tired of waiting for you, so we went to sleep."

"Stop screaming, girls, and quiet those children! Poor little Gwen is badly frightened. Get some snow, Tom, while I pick her up," commanded the uncle, and order was soon established.

The boys were all right at once, and Ruth and Alice devoted themselves to the children, who were very cross and sleepy in spite of their fright. Gwen was herself in a moment and so ashamed of her scare that she was glad there was no more light to betray her pale cheeks.

"I should have known you, uncle, at once, but to see a strange man startled me, and he didn't speak, and I thought that can was a pistol," stammered Gwen, when she had collected her wits a little.

"Why, that's my old friend and captain, Tom May. Don't you remember him, child? He thought you were all asleep, so crept out to tell me and let me in."

"How did he get in himself?" asked Gwen, glad to turn the conversation.

"Found the shed door open and surprised the

camp by a flank movement. You wouldn't do for picket duty, boys," laughed Captain Tom, enjoying the dismay of the lads.

"Oh, thunder! I forgot to bolt it when we first went for the wood. Had to open it, the place was so plaguy dark," muttered Bob, much disgusted.

"Where's Pat?" asked Tony, with great presence of mind, feeling anxious to shift all blame to his broad shoulders.

Uncle Ed shook the snow from his hair and clothes and, poking up the fire, leisurely sat down and took Gus on his knee before he replied, "Serve out the grog, Tom, while I spin my yarn."

Round went the can of hot coffee, and a few sips brightened up the young folks immensely, so that they listened with great interest to the tale of Pat's mishaps.

"The scamp was half-seas over when he started and deserves all he got. In the first place he lost his way, then tumbled overboard, and let the horses go. He floundered after them a mile or two, then lost his bearings in the storm, pitched into a ditch, broke his head, and lay there till found. The fellows carried him to a house off the road, and there he went to sleep, forgetting all about you, the horses, and his distracted mistress at home. The

animals were stopped at the crossroads, and there we found them after a lively cruise round the country. Then we hunted up Pat; but his head was in a muddle, and we could get nothing out of him. So we went home again, and then your mother remembered that you had mentioned stopping here, and we fitted out a new craft and set sail, prepared for a long voyage. Your father was away, so Tom volunteered, and here we are."

"A jolly lark! Now let us go home and go to bed," proposed Mark, with a gape.

"Isn't it most morning?" asked Tony, who had been sleeping like a dormouse.

"Just eleven. Now pack up and let us be off. The storm is over, the moon coming out, and we shall find a good supper waiting for the loved and lost. Bear a hand, Tom, and ship this little duffer, for he's off again."

Uncle Ed put Gus into the captain's arms and, taking Rita himself, led the way to the sleigh which stood at the door. In they all bundled, and after making the house safe, off they went, feeling that they had had a pretty good time on the whole.

"I will learn cooking and courage, before I try camping out again," resolved Gwen, as she went jingling homeward; and she kept her word.

WHAT BECOMES OF THE PINS

MISS ELLEN was making a new pincushion, and a very pretty one it promised to be, for she had much taste and spent half her time embroidering chair covers, crocheting tidies, and all sorts of dainty trifles. Her room was full of them; and she often declared that she did wish some one would invent a new sort of fancywork, since she had tried all the old kinds till she was tired of them. Painting china, carving wood, buttonholing butterflies and daisies on Turkish towelling, and making peacock-feather trimming, amused her for a time; but as she was not very successful, she soon gave up trying these branches and wondered if she would not take a little plain sewing for a change.

The old cushion stood on her table beside the new one, which was ready for its trimming of lace and ribbon. A row of delicate new pins also lay waiting to adorn the red satin mound, and in the old blue one still remained several pins that had evidently seen hard service.

Miss Ellen was putting a dozen needles into her

book, having just picked them out of the old cushion, and as she quilted them through the flannel leaves, she said half aloud:

"It is very evident where the needles go, but I really do wish I knew what becomes of the pins."

"I can tell you," answered a small, sharp voice,

as a long brass pin tried to straighten itself up in the middle of a faded blue cornflower, evidently prepared to address the meeting.

Miss Ellen stared much surprised, for she had used this big pin a good deal lately, but never heard it speak before. As she looked at it, she saw for the first time that its head had a tiny face, with silvery hair, two merry eyes, and a wee mouth out of which

came the metallic little voice that pierced her ear, small as it was.

"Dear me!" she said; then added politely, "If you can tell, I should be very happy to hear, for it has long been a great mystery, and no one could explain it."

The old pin tried to sit erect, and the merry eye twinkled as it went on like a garrulous creature, glad to talk after long silence:

"Men make many wonderful discoveries, my dear, but they have never found that out, and never will, because we belong to women, and only a feminine ear can hear us, a feminine mind understand our mission, or sympathize with our trials, experiences, and triumphs. For we have all these as well as human beings, and there really is not much difference between us when we come to look into the matter."

This was such a curious statement that Miss Ellen forgot her work to listen intently, and all the needles fixed their eyes on the audacious pin. Not a whit abashed it thus continued:

"I am called 'Granny' among my friends, because I have had a long and eventful life. I am hearty and well, however, in spite of this crick in my back, and

hope to serve you a good while yet, for you seem to appreciate me, stout and ordinary as I look.

"Yes, my dear, pins and people *are* alike, and that rusty darning needle need not stare so rudely, for I shall prove what I say. We are divided into classes by birth and constitution, and each can do much in its own sphere. I am a shawl pin, and it would be foolish of me to aspire to the duties of those dainty lace pins made to fasten a collar. I am contented with my lot, however, and being of a strong make and enterprising spirit, have had many adventures, some perils, and great satisfactions since I left the factory long ago. I well remember how eagerly I looked about me when the paper in which I lived, with some hundreds of relations, was hung up in a shop window, to display our glittering ranks and tempt people to buy. At last a purchaser came, a dashing young lady, who bought us with several other fancy articles and carried us away in a smart little bag, humming and talking to herself, in what I thought a very curious way.

"When we were taken out, I was all in a flutter to see where I was and what would happen next. There were so many of us, I could hardly hope to go first, for I was in the third row, and most people take

us in order. But Cora was a hasty, careless soul and pulled us out at random, so I soon found myself stuck up in a big untidy cushion, with every sort of pin you can imagine. Such a gay and giddy set I never saw, and really, my dear, their ways and conversation were quite startling to an ignorant young thing like me. Pearl, coral, diamond, jet, gold, and silver heads were all around me, as well as vulgar brass knobs, jaunty black pins, good for nothing as they snap at the least strain, and my own relations, looking eminently neat and respectable among this theatrical rabble. For I will not disguise from you, Miss Ellen, that my first mistress was an actress and my life a very gay one at the beginning. Merry, kind, and careless was the pretty Cora, and I am bound to confess I enjoyed myself immensely, for I was taken by chance with half a dozen friends to pin up the folds of her velvet train and mantle, in a fairy spectacle where she played the queen. It was very splendid, and snugly settled among the soft folds, I saw it all and probably felt that I too had my part; humble as it was, it was faithfully performed, and I never once deserted my post for six weeks.

"Among the elves who went flitting about with silvery wings and spangled robes was one dear child

who was the good genius of the queen and was always fluttering near her, so I could not help seeing and loving the dear creature. She danced and sang, came out of flowers, swung down from trees, popped up from the lower regions, and finally, when all the queen's troubles were over, flew away on a golden cloud, smiling through a blaze of red light and dropping roses as she vanished.

"When the play ended, I used to see her in an old dress, a thin shawl, and shabby hat, go limping home with a tired-looking woman who dressed the girls.

"I thought a good deal about 'Little Viola', as they called her — though her real name was Sally, I believe — and one dreadful night I played a heroic part and thrill now when I remember it."

"Go on, please; I long to know," said Miss Ellen, dropping the needle book into her lap and leaning forward to listen better.

"One evening the theatre took fire," continued the old pin impressively. "I don't know how, but all of a sudden there was a great uproar, smoke, flames, water pouring, people running frantically about, and such a wild panic I lost my small wits for a time. When I recovered them, I found Cora was leaning from a high window, with something

wrapped closely in the velvet mantle that I pinned upon the left shoulder just under a paste buckle that only sparkled while *I* did all the work.

"A little golden head lay close by me, and a white face looked up from the crimson folds; but the sweet eyes were shut; the lips were drawn with pain; a horrible odor of burnt clothes came up to me; and the small hand that clutched Cora's neck was all blistered with the cruel fire which would have devoured the child if my brave mistress had not rescued her at the risk of her own life. *She* could have escaped at first, but she heard Sally cry to her through the blinding smoke and went to find and rescue her. I dimly recalled that and pressed closer to the white shoulder, full of pride and affection for the kind soul whom I had often thought too gay and giddy to care for anything but pleasure.

"Now she was calling to the people in the street to put up a ladder, and as she leaned and called, I could see the crowds far down, the smoke and flame bursting out below, and hear the hiss of water as it fell upon the blazing walls. It was a most exciting moment, as we hung there, watching the gallant men fix the long ladder and one come climbing up till we could see his brave face and hear him shout cheerily:

" 'Swing from the window sill; I'll catch you.'

"But Cora answered, as she showed the little yellow head that shone in the red glare:

" 'No, save the child first!'

" 'Drop her then, and be quick; it's hot work here,' and the man held up his arms with a laugh, as the flames licked out below as if to eat away the frail support he stood on.

"All in one breathless moment, Cora had torn off the mantle, wrapped the child in it, bound her girdle about it, and finding the gaudy band would not tie, caught out the first pin that came to hand, and fastened it. *I* was that pin; and I felt that the child's life almost depended upon me, for as the precious bundle dropped into the man's hands, he caught it by the cloak and, putting it on his shoulder, went swiftly down. The belt strained; the velvet tore; I felt myself bending with the weight and expected every minute to see the child slip and fall on the stones below. But I held fast; I drove my point deeply in; I twisted myself round so that even the bend should be a help; and I called to the man, 'Hold tight; I'm trying my best, but what can one pin do!'

"Of course he did not hear me, but I really believe my desperate efforts were of some use; for we got

safely down and were hurried away to the hospital where other poor souls had already gone.

"The good nurse who undid that scorched, drenched, and pitiful bundle, stuck me in her shawl, and resting there, I saw the poor child laid in a little bed, her burns skilfully cared for, and her scattered senses restored by tender words and motherly kisses. How glad I was to hear that she would live, and still more rejoiced to learn next day that Cora was near by, badly burned, but not in danger, and anxious to see the child she had saved.

"Nurse Benson took the little thing in her arms to visit my poor mistress, and I went, too. But alas! I never should have known the gay and blooming girl of the day before. She would never again be able to play the lovely queen on any stage, for her fresh beauty was forever lost.

"Hard days for all of us! I took my share of trouble with the rest, though I only suffered from the strain to my back. Nurse Benson straightened me out and kept me in use, so I saw much of pain and patience in that great house, because the little gray shawl which I fastened covered a tender heart, and on that motherly bosom many aching heads found rest, many weary creatures breathed their

last, and more than one unhappy soul learned to submit.

"Among these last was poor Cora, for it was very hard to give up beauty, health, and the life she loved, so soon. Yet I do not think she ever regretted the sacrifice when she saw the grateful child well and safe, for little Sally was her best comforter, and through the long weeks she lay there half blind and suffering, the daily visit of the little one cheered her more than anything else. The poor mother was lost in the great fire, and Cora adopted the orphan as her own; and surely she had a right to what she had so dearly bought.

"They went away together at last, one quite well and strong again, the other a sad wreck, but a better woman for the trial, I think; and she carried comfort with her. Poor little Sally led her, a faithful guide, a tender nurse, a devoted daughter to her all her life."

Here the pin paused, out of breath, and Miss Ellen shook a bright drop off the lace that lay in her lap, as she said in a tone of real interest:

"What happened next? How long did you stay in the hospital?"

"I stayed a year, for Nurse used me one day to

pin up a print at the foot of a poor man's bed, and he took such comfort in it they let it hang till he went away. A lovely picture of a person who held out his arms to all the suffering and oppressed, and they gathered about him to be comforted and saved! The forlorn soul had led a wicked life, and now lay in pain, but something in that divine face taught him to hope for pardon, and when no eye but mine saw him in the lonely nights, he wept, and prayed, and struggled to repent. I think he was forgiven, for at the last a smile was on his lips that never had been there before. Then the print was taken down, and I was used to pin up a bundle of red flannel by one of the women, and for months I lay in a dark chest, meditating on the lessons I had already learned.

"Suddenly I was taken out, and when a queer round pin ball of the flannel had been made by a nice old lady, I was stuck in it with a party of fat needles and a few of my own race, all with stout bodies and big heads.

" 'The dear boy is clumsy with his fingers and needs strong things to use,' said the old lady, as she held the tomato cushion in both hands and kissed it before she put it into a soldier's 'comfort bag.'

" 'Now I shall have a lively time!' I thought, and

looked gayly about me, for I liked adventures and felt that I was sure of them now.

"I cannot begin to tell you all I went through with that boy, for he was brave as a lion and got many hard knocks. We marched, and camped, and fought, and suffered, but we *never* ran away, and when at last a Minié ball came smashing through the red cushion (which Dick often carried in his pocket as a sort of charm to keep him safe, for men seldom use pins), I nearly lost my head, for the stuffing flew out, and we were all knocked about in a dreadful way. The cushion and the old wallet together saved Dick's life, however, for the ball did not reach his brave heart, and the last I saw of him, as I fell out of the hasty hand that felt for a wound, was a soft look in the brave bright eyes, as he said to himself with a smile:

" 'Dear old mother hasn't lost her boy yet, thank God!'

"A colored lad picked me up, as I lay shining on the grass, and pins being scarce in those parts, gave me to his mammy, who kept me to fasten her turban. Quite a new scene I found, for in the old cabin were a dozen children and their mothers making ready to go North. The men were all away fighting or serving the army; so mammy led the little

troop, and they marched off one day following the gay turban like a banner, for she had a valiant soul and was bound to find safety and freedom for her children at all risks.

"In my many wanderings to and fro, I never made so strange a journey as that one, but I enjoyed it, full of danger, weariness, and privation as it was; and every morning when mammy put on the red and yellow handkerchief, I was proud to sit aloft on that good gray head and lead the forlorn little army toward a land of liberty.

"We got there at last, and she fell to work over a washtub to earn the bread for the hungry mouths. I had stood by her through all those weary weeks and did not want to leave her now; but I went off pinning a paper round some clean clothes on a Saturday morning.

" 'Now I wonder what will come next!' I thought, as Thomas Jefferson, or 'Jeff', as they called him, went whistling away with the parcel through the streets.

"Crossing the park, he spied a lovely butterfly, which had strayed in from the country, caught and pinned it on his hat to please little Dinah when he got home. The pretty creature soon writhed its delicate life away, but its beauty attracted the eye

of a pale girl hurrying along with a roll of work under her arm.

" 'Will you sell me that?' she asked, and Jeff gladly consented, wondering what she would do with it. So did I, but when we got to her room, I soon saw, for she pinned the impaled butterfly against a bit of blue paper, and painted it so well that its golden wings seemed to quiver as they did in life. A very poor place it was, but full of lovely things, and I grew artistic with just looking about me at the pictures on the walls, the flowers blooming on plates and panels, birds and insects kept for copies, and gay bits of stuff as backgrounds.

"But more beautiful than anything she made was the girl's quiet, busy life alone in the big city, for she was hoping to be an artist and worked day and night to compass her desire. So poor, but so happy, I used to wonder why no one helped her and kept her from such hard, yet patient, waiting. But no one did, and I could watch her toiling away as I held the butterfly against the wall, feeling as if it was a symbol of herself, beating her delicate wings in that close place till her heart was broken by the cruel fate that held her there when she should have been out in the free sunshine. But she found a good customer for her pretty work in a rich lady who had

nothing to do but amuse herself and spend much time and money in fancywork.

"I know all about it, for one day an order came from the great store where her designs were often bought, and she was very happy painting some purple pansies upon velvet, and she copied her yellow butterfly to float above them.

"The poor insect was very dry and crumbled at a touch; so my task there was done, and as my mistress rolled up the packet, she took me to fasten it securely, singing as she did so, for every penny was precious.

"We all went together to the rich lady, and she embroidered the flowers on a screen very like that one yonder. I thought she would throw me away, I was so battered now, but she took a fancy to use me in various ways about her canvas work, and I lived with her all winter. A kind lady, my dear, but I often wished I could suggest to her better ways of spending her life than everlasting fancywork. She never seemed to see the wants of those about her, never lent an ear to the poor, or found delight in giving of her abundance to those who had little to brighten their lives; but sighed because she had nothing to do, when the world was full of work and she blessed with so many good gifts to use and to

enjoy. I hope she will see her mistake some day and not waste all her life on trifles, else she will regret it sadly by and by."

Here the pin paused with a keen glance at Miss Ellen, who had suddenly begun to sew with a bright color in her cheeks, for the purple pansies were on the screen that stood before her fireplace, and she recognized the portrait of herself in that last description. But she did not fancy being lectured by a pin, so she asked with a smile as she plaited up her lace:

"That is all very interesting, but you have not yet told me what becomes of the pins, Granny."

"Pins, like people, shape their own lives, in a great measure, my dear, and go to their reward when they are used up. The good ones sink into the earth and turn to silver, to come forth again in a new and precious form. The bad ones crumble away to nothing in cracks and dust heaps, with no hope of salvation, unless some human hand lifts them up and gives them a chance to try again. Some are lazy and slip out of sight to escape service; some are too sharp and prick and scratch wherever they are. Others are poor, weak things, who bend up and lose their heads as soon as they are used. Some obtrude themselves on all occasions, and some are

never to be found in times of need. All have the choice to wear out or to rust out. I chose the former and have had a useful, happy life so far. I'm not as straight as I once was, but I'm bright still; my point is sharp; my head firm; and age has not weakened me much, I hope, but made me wiser, better, and more contented to do my duty, wherever I am, than when I left my native paper long ago."

Before Miss Ellen could express her respect for the worthy old pin, a dismal groan was heard from the blue cushion, and a small voice croaked aloud:

"Alas, alas, I chose to rust out, and here I am, miserable, worthless thing, whom no one can use or care for. Lift the ruffle and behold a sad contrast to the faithful, honest, happy Granny, who has told us such a varied tale."

"Bless me, what possesses everything to-day!" exclaimed Miss Ellen, looking under the frill of the old cushion to see who was speaking now. There, to be sure, she found a pin hidden away, and so rusty that she could hardly pull it out. But it came creaking forth at the third tug, and when it was set up beside Granny, she cried out in her cheery way:

"Try Dr. Emery; he can cure most cases of rust, and it is never too late to mend, neighbor."

"Too late for me!" sighed the newcomer. "The

rust of idleness has eaten into my vitals while I lay in my silken bed, and my chance is gone forever. I was bright, and strong, and sharp once, but I feared work and worry, and I hid, growing duller, dimmer, and more useless every day. I am good for nothing; throw me away, and let the black pins mourn for a wasted life."

"No," said Miss Ellen, "you are not useless, for you two shall sit together in my new cushion, a warning to me, as well as to the other pins, to choose the right way in time and wear out with doing our duty, rather than rust out as so many do. Thank you, Granny, for your little lecture; I will not forget it, but go at once and find that poor girl and help her all I can. Rest here, you good old soul, and teach these little things to follow your example."

As she spoke, Miss Ellen set the two pins in the middle of the red-satin cushion, stuck the smaller pins round them, and hastened to put on her shawl lest something should prevent her from going.

"Take me with you; I'm not tired; I love to work! Use me, dear mistress, and let me help in the good work!" cried Granny, with a lively skip that sent her out upon the bureau.

So Miss Ellen pinned her shawl with the old pin

instead of the fine brooch she had in her hand, and they went gayly away together, leaving the rusty one to bemoan itself and all the little ones to resolve privately that they would not hide away from care and labor, but take their share bravely and have a good record to show when they went, at last, where the good pins go.

NELLY'S HOSPITAL

NELLY sat beside her mother picking lint; but while her fingers flew, her eyes often looked wistfully out into the meadow, golden with buttercups and bright with sunshine. Presently she said, rather bashfully, but very earnestly, "Mamma, I want to tell you a little plan I've made, if you'll please not laugh."

"I think I can safely promise that, my dear," said her mother, putting down her work that she might listen quite respectfully.

Nelly looked pleased, and went on confidingly. "Since brother Will came home with his lame foot and I've helped you tend him, I've heard a great deal about hospitals, and liked it very much. To-day I said I wanted to go and be a nurse, like Aunt Mercy; but Will laughed and told me I'd better begin by nursing sick birds and butterflies and pussies before I tried to take care of men. I did not like to be made fun of, but I've been thinking that it would be very pleasant to have a little hospital all my own and be a nurse in it, because, if I took pains,

so many pretty creatures might be made well, perhaps. Could I, mamma?"

Her mother wanted to smile at the idea, but did not, for Nelly looked up with her heart and eyes so full of tender compassion, both for the unknown men for whom her little hands had done their best and for the smaller sufferers nearer home, that she stroked the shining head, and answered readily: "Yes, Nelly, it will be a proper charity for such a young Samaritan, and you may learn much if you are in earnest. You must study how to feed and nurse your little patients, else your pity will do no good and your hospital become a prison. I will help you, and Tony shall be your surgeon."

"O mamma, how good you always are to me! Indeed, I am in truly earnest; I will learn; I will be kind; and may I go now and begin?"

"You may, but tell me first, where will you have your hospital?"

"In my room, mamma; it is so snug and sunny, and I never should forget it there," said Nelly.

"You must not forget it anywhere. I think that plan will not do. How would you like to find caterpillars walking in your bed, to hear sick pussies mewing in the night, to have beetles clinging to

your clothes, or see mice, bugs, and birds tumbling downstairs whenever the door was open?" said her mother.

Nelly laughed at that, thought a minute, then clapped her hands, and cried: "Let us have the old summerhouse! My doves only use the upper part, and it would be so like Frank in the story book. Please say yes again, mamma."

Her mother did say yes, and snatching up her hat, Nelly ran to find Tony, the gardener's son, a pleasant lad of twelve, who was Nelly's favorite playmate. Tony pronounced the plan a "jolly" one and, leaving his work, followed his young mistress to the summerhouse, for she could not wait one minute.

"What must we do first?" she asked, as they stood looking in at the dim, dusty room, full of garden tools, bags of seeds, old flowerpots, and watering cans.

"Clear out the rubbish, miss," answered Tony.

"Here it goes, then," and Nelly began bundling everything out in such haste that she broke two flowerpots, scattered all the squash seeds, and brought a pile of rakes and hoes clattering down about her ears.

"Just wait a bit, and let me take the lead, miss.

You hand me things; I'll pile 'em in the barrow and wheel 'em off to the barn; then it will save time and be finished up tidy."

Nelly did as he advised, and very soon nothing but dust remained.

"What next?" she asked, not knowing in the least.

"I'll sweep up, while you see if Polly can come and scrub the room out. It ought to be done before you stay here, let alone the patients."

"So it had," said Nelly, looking very wise all of a sudden. "Will says the wards — that means the rooms, Tony — are scrubbed every day or two and kept very clean and well venti — something — I can't say it; but it means having plenty of air come in. I can clean windows while Polly mops, and then we shall soon be done."

Away she ran, feeling very busy and important. Polly came, and very soon the room looked like another place. The four latticed windows were set wide open, so the sunshine came dancing through the vines that grew outside, and curious roses peeped in to see what frolic was afoot. The walls shone white again, for not a spider dared to stay; the wide seat which encircled the room was dustless now, the floor as nice as willing hands could make

it, and the south wind blew away all musty odors with its fragrant breath.

"How fine it looks!" cried Nelly, dancing on the doorstep, lest a footprint should mar the still damp floor.

"I'd almost like to fall sick for the sake of staying here," said Tony, admiringly. "Now, what sort of beds are you going to have, miss?"

"I suppose it won't do to put butterflies and toads and worms into beds, like the real soldiers where Will was?" answered Nelly, looking anxious.

Tony could hardly help shouting at the idea; but rather than trouble his little mistress, he said very soberly: "I'm afraid they wouldn't lie easy, not being used to it. Tucking up a butterfly would about kill him; the worms would be apt to get lost among the bedclothes; and the toads would tumble out the first thing."

"I shall have to ask mamma about it. What will you do while I'm gone?" said Nelly, unwilling that a moment should be lost.

"I'll make frames for nettings to the windows, else the doves will come in and eat up the sick people."

"I think they will know that it is a hospital and be too kind to hurt or frighten their neighbors," be-

gan Nelly; but as she spoke, a plump white dove walked in, looked about with its red-ringed eyes, and quietly pecked up a tiny bug that had just ventured out from the crack where it had taken refuge when the deluge came.

"Yes, we must have the nettings. I'll ask mamma for some lace," said Nelly, when she saw that; and taking her pet dove on her shoulder, told it about her hospital as she went toward the house; for, loving all little creatures as she did, it grieved her to have any harm befall even the least or plainest of them. She had a sweet child fancy that her playmates understood her language as she did theirs and that birds, flowers, animals, and insects felt for her the same affection which she felt for them. Love always makes friends, and nothing seemed to fear the gentle child, but welcomed her like a little sun who shone alike on all and never suffered an eclipse.

She was gone some time, and when she came back, her mind was full of new plans, one hand full of rushes, the other of books, while over her head floated the lace, and a bright green ribbon hung across her arm.

"Mamma says that the best beds will be little baskets, boxes, cages, and any sort of thing that

suits a patient; for each will need different care and food and medicine. I have not baskets enough; so, as I cannot have pretty white beds, I am going to braid pretty green nests for my patients, and while I do it, mamma thought you'd read to me the pages she has marked, so that we may begin right."

"Yes, miss; I like that. But what is the ribbon for?" asked Tony.

"Oh, that's for you. Will says that if you are to be an army surgeon, you must have a green band on your arm; so I got this to tie on when we play hospital."

Tony let her decorate the sleeve of his gray jacket, and when the nettings were done, the welcome books were opened and enjoyed. It was a happy time, sitting in the sunshine, with leaves pleasantly astir all about them, doves cooing overhead, and flowers sweetly gossiping together through the summer afternoon. Nelly wove her smooth, green rushes; Tony pored over his pages; and both found something better than fairy legends in the family histories of insects, birds, and beasts. All manner of wonders appeared and were explained to them, until Nelly felt as if a new world had been given her, so full of beauty, interest, and pleasure that she never could be tired of studying it. Many of

these things were not strange to Tony, because, born among plants, he had grown up with them as if they were brothers and sisters, and the sturdy, brown-faced boy had learned many lessons which no poet or philosopher could have taught him, unless he had become as childlike as himself and studied from the same great book.

When the baskets were done, the marked pages all read, and the sun had begun to draw his rosy curtains round him before smiling "Good-night," Nelly ranged the green beds round the room; Tony put in the screens; and the hospital was ready. The little nurse was so excited that she could hardly eat her supper and directly afterwards ran up to tell Will how well she had succeeded with the first part of her enterprise. Now brother Will was a brave young officer, who had fought stoutly and done his duty like a man. But, when lying weak and wounded at home, the cheerful courage which had led him safely through many dangers seemed to have deserted him, and he was often gloomy, sad, or fretful, because he longed to be at his post again, and time passed very slowly. This troubled his mother and made Nelly wonder why he found lying in a pleasant room so much harder than fighting battles or

making weary marches. Anything that interested and amused him was very welcome, and when Nelly, climbing on the arm of his sofa, told her plans, mishaps, and successes, he laughed out more heartily than he had done for many a day, and his thin face began to twinkle with fun as it used to do so long ago. That pleased Nelly, and she chatted like any affectionate little magpie, until Will was really interested; for when one is ill, small things amuse.

"Do you expect your patients to come to you, Nelly?" he asked.

"No, I shall go and look for them. I often see poor things suffering in the garden and the woods, and always feel as if they ought to be taken care of, as people are."

"You won't like to carry insane bugs, lame toads, and convulsive kittens in your hands, and they would not stay on a stretcher if you had one. You should have an ambulance and be a branch of the Sanitary Commission," said Will.

Nelly had often heard the words, but did not quite understand what they meant. So Will told her of that great and never-failing charity, to which thousands owe their lives; and the child listened with lips apart, eyes often full, and so much love

and admiration in her heart that she could find no words in which to tell it. When her brother paused, she said earnestly:

"Yes, I will be a Sanitary. This little cart of mine shall be my ambulance, and I'll never let my water barrels go empty, never drive too fast, or be rough with my poor passengers, like some of the men you tell about. Does this look like an ambulance, Will?"

"Not a bit; but it will, if you and mamma would like to help me. I want four long bits of cane, a square of white cloth, some pieces of thin wood, and the gum pot," said Will, sitting up to examine the little cart, feeling like a boy again, as he took out his knife and began to whittle.

Upstairs and downstairs ran Nelly until all necessary materials were collected, and almost breathlessly she watched her brother arch the canes over the cart, cover them with cloth, and fit in an upper shelf of small compartments, each lined with cotton wool to serve as beds for wounded insects, lest they should hurt one another or jostle out. The lower part was left free for any larger creatures which Nelly might find. Among her toys she had a tiny cask which only needed a peg to be water-tight. This was filled and fitted in front, because as the small sufferers needed no seats, there was no

place for it behind, and as Nelly was both horse and driver, it was more convenient there. On each side of it stood a box of stores. In one were minute rollers, as bandages are called, a few bottles not yet filled, and a wee doll's jar of cold cream, because Nelly could not feel that her outfit was complete without a medicine chest. The other box was full of crumbs, bits of sugar, bird seed, and grains of wheat and corn, lest any famished stranger should die for want of food before she got it home. Then mamma painted "U. S. San. Com." in bright letters on the cover, and Nelly received her charitable plaything with a long sigh of satisfaction.

"Nine o'clock already! Bless me, what a short evening this has been!" exclaimed Will, as Nelly came to give him her good-night kiss.

"And such a happy one," she answered. "Thank you very, very much, dear Will. I only wish my little ambulance was big enough for you to go in. I'd so like to give you the first ride."

"Nothing I should like better, if it were possible, though I've a prejudice against ambulances in general. But as I cannot ride, I'll try to hop out to your hospital to-morrow, and see how you get on," — which was a great deal for Captain Will to say, because he had been too listless to leave his sofa for several days.

That promise sent Nelly happily away to bed, only stopping to pop her head out of the window to see if it was likely to be a fair day to-morrow and to tell Tony about the new plan as he passed below.

"Where will you go to look for your first load of sick people, miss?" he asked.

"All round the garden first, then through the grove, and home across the brook. Do you think I can find any patients that way?" said Nelly.

"I know you will. Good-night, miss," and Tony walked away with a merry look on his face that Nelly would not have understood if she had seen it.

Up rose the sun bright and early, and up rose Nurse Nelly almost as early and as bright. Breakfast was taken in a great hurry, and before the dew was off the grass, this branch of the S. C. was all astir. Papa, mamma, big brother, and baby sister, men and maids, all looked out to see the funny little ambulance depart, and nowhere in all the summer fields was there a happier child than Nelly, as she went smiling down the garden path, where tall flowers kissed her as she passed and every blithe bird seemed singing a Godspeed.

"How I wonder what I shall find first," she thought, looking sharply on all sides as she went.

Crickets chirped, grasshoppers leaped, ants worked busily at their subterranean houses, spiders spun shining webs from twig to twig, bees were coming for their bags of gold, and butterflies had just begun their holiday. A large white one alighted on the top of the ambulance, walked over the inscription as if spelling it letter by letter, then floated away from flower to flower, like one carrying the good news far and wide.

"Now every one will know about the hospital and be glad to see me coming," thought Nelly. And indeed it seemed so, for just then a blackbird, sitting on the garden wall, burst out with a song full of musical joy; Nelly's kitten came running after to stare at the wagon and rub her soft side against it; a bright-eyed toad looked out from his cool bower among the lily leaves; and at that minute Nelly found her first patient.In one of the dewy cobwebs hanging from a shrub near by sat a fat black-and-yellow spider, watching a fly, whose delicate wings were just caught in the net. The poor fly buzzed pitifully and struggled so hard that the whole web shook; but the more he struggled, the more he entangled himself, and the fierce spider was preparing to descend, that it might weave a shroud about its prey, when a little finger broke the threads and

lifted the fly safely into the palm of a hand, where he lay faintly humming his thanks.

Nelly had heard much about contrabands, knew who they were, and was very much interested in them; so when she freed the poor black fly, she played he was her contraband and felt glad that her first patient was one that needed help so much. Carefully brushing away as much of the web as she could, she left small Pompey, as she named him, to free his own legs, lest her clumsy fingers should hurt him; then she laid him in one of the soft beds with a grain or two of sugar, if he needed refreshment, and bade him rest and recover from his fright, remembering that he was at liberty to fly away whenever he liked, because she had no wish to make a slave of him.

Feeling very happy over this new friend, Nelly went on singing softly as she walked, and presently she found a pretty caterpillar dressed in brown fur, although the day was warm. He lay so still she thought him dead, until he rolled himself into a ball as she touched him.

"I think you are either faint from the heat of this thick coat of yours or that you are going to make a cocoon of yourself, Mr. Fuzz," said Nelly. "Now I want to see you turn into a butterfly, so I shall take

you, and if you get lively again, I will let you go. I shall play that you have given out on a march, as the soldiers sometimes do, and been left behind for the Sanitary people to see to."

In went sulky Mr. Fuzz, and on trundled the ambulance until a golden-green rose beetle was discovered, lying on his back kicking as if in a fit.

"Dear me, what shall I do for him?" thought Nelly. "He acts as the baby did when she was so ill and mamma put her in a warm bath. I haven't my little tub here or any hot water, and I'm afraid the beetle would not like it if I had. Perhaps he has a pain in his stomach; I'll turn him over and pat his back, as nurse does baby's when she cries for pain like that."

She set the beetle on his legs and did her best to comfort him; but he was evidently in great distress, for he could not walk, and instead of lifting his emerald overcoat and spreading the wings that lay underneath, he turned over again and kicked more violently than before. Not knowing what to do, Nelly put him into one of her soft nests for Tony to cure if possible. She found no more patients in the garden except a dead bee, which she wrapped in a leaf and took home to bury. When she came to the grove, it was so green and cool she longed to sit

and listen to the whisper of the pines and watch the larch tassels wave in the wind. But, recollecting her charitable errand, she went rustling along the pleasant path until she came to another patient, over which she stood considering several minutes before she could decide whether or not it was best to take it to her hospital, because it was a little gray snake with a bruised tail. She knew it would not hurt her, yet she was afraid of it; she thought it pretty, yet could not like it; she pitied its pain, yet shrunk from helping it, for it had a fiery eye and a sharp, quivering tongue that looked as if it wanted to sting.

"He is a rebel; I wonder if I ought to be good to him," thought Nelly, watching the reptile writhe with pain. "Will said there were sick rebels in his hospital, and one was very kind to him. It says, too, in my little book, 'Love your enemies.' I think snakes are mine, but I guess I'll try to love him because God made him. Some boy will kill him if I leave him here, and then perhaps his mother will be very sad about it. Come, poor worm; I wish to help you, so be patient and don't frighten me."

Then Nelly laid her little handkerchief on the ground, with a stick gently lifted the wounded snake upon it, and folding it together, laid it in

the ambulance. She was thoughtful after that and so busy puzzling her young head about the duty of loving those who hate us and being kind to those who are disagreeable or unkind, that she went through the rest of the wood quite forgetful of her

work. A soft "queek, queek!" made her look up and listen. The sound came from the long meadow grass, and bending it carefully back she found a half-fledged bird, with one wing trailing on the ground and its eyes dim with pain or hunger.

"You darling thing, did you fall out of your nest and hurt your wing?" cried Nelly, looking up into the single tree that stood near by. No nest was to be seen; no parent birds hovered overhead; and little Robin could only tell its troubles in that mournful "queek, queek, queek!"

Nelly ran to get both her chests and, sitting down beside the bird, tried to feed it. To her great joy it ate crumb after crumb as if it were half starved and soon fluttered nearer with a confiding fearlessness that made her very proud. Soon baby Robin seemed quite comfortable; his eye brightened; he "queeked" no more, and but for the drooping wing would have been himself again. With one of her bandages Nelly bound both wings closely to his sides for fear he should hurt himself by trying to fly; and, though he seemed amazed at her proceedings, he behaved very well, only staring at her and ruffling up his few feathers in a funny way that made her laugh. Then she had to discover some way of accommodating her two larger patients, so that

neither should hurt nor alarm the other. A bright thought came to her after much pondering. Carefully lifting the handkerchief, she pinned the two ends to the roof of the cart, and there swung little Forked-tongue, while Rob lay easily below.

By this time Nelly began to wonder how it happened that she found so many more injured things than ever before. But it never entered her innocent head that Tony had searched the wood and meadow before she was up and laid most of these creatures ready to her hands, that she might not be disappointed. She had not yet lost her faith in fairies, so she fancied they too belonged to her small sisterhood, and presently it did really seem impossible to doubt that the good folk had been at work.

Coming to the bridge that crossed the brook, she stopped a moment to watch the water ripple over the bright pebbles, the ferns bend down to drink, the funny tadpoles frolic in quieter nooks where the sun shone, and the dragon flies swing among the rushes. When Nelly turned to go on, her blue eyes opened wide and the handle of the ambulance dropped with a noise that caused a stout frog to skip into the water heels over head. Directly in the middle of the bridge was a pretty green tent,

made of two tall burdock leaves. The stems were stuck into cracks between the boards; the tips were pinned together with a thorn; and one great buttercup nodded in the doorway like a sleepy sentinel. Nelly stared and smiled, listened, and looked about on every side. Nothing was seen but the quiet meadow and the shady grove; nothing was heard but the babble of the brook and the cheery music of the bobolinks.

"Yes," said Nelly softly to herself, "that is a fairy tent, and in it I may find a baby elf sick with whooping cough or scarlet fever. How splendid it would be! Only I could never nurse such a dainty thing."

Stopping eagerly, she peeped over the buttercup's drowsy head and saw what seemed a tiny cock of hay. She had no time to feel disappointed, for the haycock began to stir, and, looking nearer, she beheld two silvery-gray mites, who wagged wee tails and stretched themselves as if they had just waked up. Nelly knew that they were young field mice and rejoiced over them, feeling rather relieved that no fairy had appeared, though she still believed them to have had a hand in the matter.

"I shall call the mice my Babes in the Wood, because they are lost and covered up with leaves," said Nelly, as she laid them in her snuggest bed,

where they nestled close together and fell fast asleep again.

Being very anxious to get home, that she might tell her adventures and show how great was the need of a Sanitary Commission in that region, Nelly marched proudly up the avenue and, having displayed her load, hurried to the hospital, where another applicant was waiting for her. On the step of the door lay a large turtle, with one claw gone, and on his back was pasted a bit of paper with his name, "Commodore Waddle, U. S. N." Nelly knew this was a joke of Will's, but welcomed the ancient mariner and called Tony to help her get him in.

All that morning they were very busy settling the newcomers, for both people and books had to be consulted before they could decide what diet and treatment was best for each. The winged contraband had taken Nelly at her word and flown away on the journey home. Little Rob was put in a large cage, where he could use his legs, yet not injure his lame wing. Forked-tongue lay under a wire cover, on sprigs of fennel, for the gardener said that snakes were fond of it. The Babes in the Wood were put to bed in one of the rush baskets, under a cotton-wool coverlet. Greenback, the beetle, found ease for his unknown aches in the warm heart of a rose, where

he sunned himself all day. The Commodore was made happy in a tub of water, grass, and stones, and Mr. Fuzz was put in a well-ventilated glass box to decide whether he would be a cocoon or not.

Tony had not been idle while his mistress was away, and he showed her the hospital garden he had made close by, in which were cabbage, nettle, and mignonette plants for the butterflies, flowering herbs for the bees, chickweed and hemp for the birds, catnip for the pussies, and plenty of room left for whatever other patients might need. In the afternoon, while Nelly did her task at lint picking, talking busily to Will as she worked and interesting him in her affairs, Tony cleared a pretty spot in the grove for the burying ground and made ready some small bits of slate on which to write the names of those who died. He did not have it ready an hour too soon, for at sunset two little graves were needed, and Nurse Nelly shed tender tears for her first losses as she laid the motherless mice in one smooth hollow and the gray-coated rebel in the other. She had learned to care for him already and, when she found him dead, was very glad she had been kind to him, hoping that he knew it and died happier in her hospital than all alone in the shadowy wood.

The rest of Nelly's patients prospered, and of

the many added afterward few died, because of Tony's skilful treatment and her own faithful care. Every morning when the day proved fair, the little ambulance went out upon its charitable errand; every afternoon Nelly worked for the small sufferers whom she loved; and every evening brother Will read aloud to her from useful books, showed her wonders with his microscope, or prescribed remedies for the patients, whom he soon knew by name and took much interest in. It was Nelly's holiday; but though she studied no lessons, she learned much and unconsciously made her pretty play both an example and a rebuke for others.

At first it seemed a childish pastime, and people laughed. But there was something in the familiar words "Sanitary", "hospital", and "ambulance" that made them pleasant sounds to many ears. As reports of Nelly's work went through the neighborhood, other children came to see and copy her design. Rough lads looked ashamed when in her wards they found harmless creatures hurt by them, and going out they said among themselves, "We won't stone birds, chase butterflies, and drown the girls' little cats any more, though we won't tell them so." And most of the lads kept their word so well that people said there never had been so many birds

before as all that summer haunted wood and field. Tender-hearted playmates brought their pets to be cured; even busy fathers had a friendly word for the small charity, which reminded them so sweetly of the great one which should never be forgotten; lonely mothers sometimes looked out with wet eyes as the little ambulance went by, recalling thoughts of absent sons who might be journeying painfully to some far-off hospital, where brave women waited to tend them with hands as willing, hearts as tender, as those the gentle child gave to her self-appointed task.

At home the charm worked also. No more idle days for Nelly or fretful ones for Will, because the little sister would not neglect the helpless creatures so dependent upon her, and the big brother was ashamed to complain, after watching the patience of these lesser sufferers, and merrily said he would try to bear his own wound as quietly and bravely as the "Commodore" bore his. Nelly never knew how much good she had done Captain Will until he went away again in the early autumn. Then he thanked her for it, and though she cried for joy and sorrow, she never forgot it, because he left something behind him which always pleasantly reminded her of the double success her little hospital had won.

When Will was gone and she had prayed softly in her heart that God would keep him safe and bring him home again, she dried her tears and went away to find comfort in the place where he had spent so many happy hours with her. She had not been there before that day, and when she reached the door, she stood quite still and wanted very much to cry again, for something beautiful had happened. She had often asked Will for a motto for her hospital, and he had promised to find her one. She thought he had forgotten it; but even in the hurry of that busy day he had found time to do more than keep his word, while Nelly sat indoors, lovingly brightening the tarnished buttons on the blue coat that had seen so many battles.

Above the roof, where the doves cooed in the sun, now rustled a white flag with the golden "S.C." shining on it as the west wind tossed it to and fro. Below, on the smooth panel of the door, a skilful pencil had drawn two arching ferns, in whose soft shadow, poised upon a mushroom, stood a little figure of Nurse Nelly and underneath it another of Dr. Tony bottling medicine, with spectacles upon his nose. Both hands of the miniature Nelly were outstretched, as if beckoning to a train of insects, birds, and beasts, which was so long that it not only

circled round the lower rim of this fine sketch, but dwindled in the distance to mere dots and lines. Such merry conceits as one found there! A mouse bringing the tail it had lost in some cruel trap, a dor bug with a shade over its eyes, an invalid butterfly carried in a tiny litter by long-legged spiders, a fat frog with gouty feet hopping upon crutches, Jenny Wren sobbing in a nice handkerchief, as she brought poor dear dead Cock Robin to be restored to life. Rabbits, lambs, cats, calves, and turtles, all came trouping up to be healed by the benevolent little maid who welcomed them so heartily.

Nelly laughed at these comical mites until the tears ran down her cheeks, and thought she never could be tired of looking at them. But presently she saw four lines clearly printed underneath her picture, and her childish face grew sweetly serious as she read the words of the great poet, which Will had made both compliment and motto:

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

AN OLD-FASHIONED THANKSGIVING

SIXTY years ago, up among the New Hampshire hills, lived Farmer Bassett, with a house full of sturdy sons and daughters growing up about him. They were poor in money, but rich in land and love, for the wide acres of wood, corn, and pasture land fed, warmed, and clothed the flock, while mutual patience, affection, and courage made the old farmhouse a very happy home.

November had come; the crops were in; and barn, buttery, and bin were overflowing with the harvest that rewarded the summer's hard work. The big kitchen was a jolly place just now, for in the great fireplace roared a cheerful fire; on the walls hung garlands of dried apples, onions, and corn; up aloft from the beams shone crook-necked squashes, juicy hams, and dried venison — for in those days deer still haunted the deep forests, and hunters flourished. Savory smells were in the air; on the crane hung steaming kettles; and down among the red embers copper saucepans simmered, all suggestive of some approaching feast.

A white-headed baby lay in the old blue cradle that had rocked seven other babies, now and then lifting his head to look out, like a round, full moon, then subsiding to kick and crow contentedly and suck the rosy apple he had no teeth to bite. Two small boys sat on the wooden settle shelling corn for popping and picking out the biggest nuts from the goodly store their own hands had gathered in October. Four young girls stood at the long dresser, busily chopping meat, pounding spice, and slicing apples; and the tongues of Tilly, Prue, Roxy, and Rhody went as fast as their hands. Farmer Bassett and Eph, the oldest boy, were "chorin' 'round" outside, for Thanksgiving was at hand, and all must be in order for that time-honored day.

To and fro, from table to hearth, bustled buxom Mrs. Bassett, flushed and floury, but busy and blithe as the queen bee of this busy little hive should be.

"I do like to begin seasonable and have things to my mind. Thanksgivin' dinners can't be drove, and it does take a sight of victuals to fill all these hungry stomicks," said the good woman, as she gave a vigorous stir to the great kettle of cider apple sauce and cast a glance of housewifely pride at the fine array of pies set forth on the buttery shelves.

"Only one more day and then it will be time to

eat. I didn't take but one bowl of hasty pudding this morning, so I shall have plenty of room when the nice things come," confided Seth to Sol, as he cracked a large hazelnut as easily as a squirrel.

"No need of my starvin' beforehand. I *always* have room enough, and I'd like to have Thanksgiving every day," answered Solomon, gloating like a young ogre over the little pig that lay near by, ready for roasting.

"Sakes alive, I don't, boys! It's a marcy it don't come but once a year. I should be worn to a threadpaper with all this extra work atop of my winter weavin' and spinnin'," laughed their mother, as she plunged her plump arms into the long bread trough and began to knead the dough as if a famine was at hand.

Tilly, the oldest girl, a red-cheeked, black-eyed lass of fourteen, was grinding briskly at the mortar, for spices were costly, and not a grain must be wasted. Prue kept time with the chopper, and the twins sliced away at the apples till their little brown arms ached, for all knew how to work and did so now with a will.

"I think it's real fun to have Thankskiving at home. I'm sorry Gran'ma is sick, so we can't go there as usual, but I like to mess 'round here, don't

you, girls?" asked Tilly, pausing to take a sniff at the spicy pestle.

"It will be kind of lonesome with only our own folks." "I like to see all the cousins and aunts, and have games, and sing," cried the twins, who were regular little romps and could run, swim, coast, and shout as well as their brothers.

"I don't care a mite for all that. It will be so nice to eat dinner together, warm and comfortable at home," said quiet Prue, who loved her own cozy nooks like a cat.

"Come, girls, fly 'round and get your chores done, so we can clear away for dinner jest as soon as I clap my bread into the oven," called Mrs. Bassett presently, as she rounded off the last loaf of brown bread which was to feed the hungry mouths that seldom tasted any other.

"Here's a man comin' up the hill, lively!" "Guess it's Gad Hopkins. Pa told him to bring a dezzen oranges, if they warn't too high!" shouted Sol and Seth, running to the door, while the girls smacked their lips at the thought of this rare treat, and Baby threw his apple overboard, as if getting ready for a new cargo.

But all were doomed to disappointment, for it was not Gad, with the much desired fruit. It was a

stranger, who threw himself off his horse and hurried up to Mr. Bassett in the yard, with some brief message that made the farmer drop his ax and look so sober that his wife guessed at once some bad news had come; and crying, "Mother's wuss! I know she is!" out ran the good woman, forgetful of the flour on her arms and the oven waiting for its most important batch.

The man said old Mr. Chadwick, down to Keene, stopped him as he passed and told him to tell Mrs. Bassett her mother was failin' fast, and she'd better come to-day. He knew no more, and having delivered his errand he rode away, saying it looked like snow and he must be jogging, or he wouldn't get home till night.

"We must go right off, Eldad. Hitch up, and I'll be ready in less'n no time," said Mrs. Bassett, wasting not a minute in tears and lamentations, but pulling off her apron as she went in, with her mind in a sad jumble of bread, anxiety, turkey, sorrow, haste, and cider apple sauce.

A few words told the story, and the children left their work to help her get ready, mingling their grief for "Gran'ma" with regrets for the lost dinner.

"I'm dreadful sorry, dears, but it can't be helped. I couldn't cook nor eat no way, now, and if that

blessed woman gets better sudden, as she has before, we'll have cause for thanksgivin', and I'll give you a dinner you won't forget in a hurry," said Mrs. Bassett, as she tied on her brown-silk pumpkin hood, with a sob for the good old mother who had made it for her.

Not a child complained after that, but ran about helpfully, bringing moccasins, heating the footstone, and getting ready for a long drive, because Gran'ma lived twenty miles away, and there were no railroads in those parts to whisk people to and fro like magic. By the time the old yellow sleigh was at the door, the bread was in the oven and Mrs. Bassett was waiting, with her camlet cloak on and the baby done up like a small bale of blankets.

"Now, Eph, you must look after the cattle like a man and keep up the fires, for there's a storm brewin', and neither the children nor dumb critters must suffer," said Mr. Bassett, as he turned up the collar of his rough coat and put on his blue mittens, while the old mare shook her bells as if she preferred a trip to Keene to hauling wood all day.

"Tilly, put extry comfortables on the beds tonight; the wind is so searchin' up chamber. Have the baked beans and Injun puddin' for dinner, and whatever you do, don't let the boys git at the mince

pies, or you'll have them down sick. I shall come back the minute I can leave Mother. Pa will come to-morrer, anyway, so keep snug and be good. I depend on you, my darter; use your jedgment, and don't let nothin' happen while Mother's away."

"Yes'm, yes'm — good-by, good-by!" called the children, as Mrs. Bassett was packed into the sleigh and driven away, leaving a stream of directions behind her.

Eph, the sixteen-year-old boy, immediately put on his biggest boots, assumed a sober, responsible manner, and surveyed his little responsibilities with a paternal air, drolly like his father's. Tilly tied on her mother's bunch of keys, rolled up the sleeves of her homespun gown, and began to order about the younger girls. They soon forgot poor Granny and found it great fun to keep house all alone, for Mother seldom left home, but ruled her family in the good old-fashioned way. There were no servants, for the little daughters were Mrs. Bassett's only maids, and the stout boys helped their father, all working happily together with no wages but love, learning in the best manner the use of the heads and hands with which they were to make their own way in the world.

The few flakes that caused the farmer to predict

bad weather soon increased to a regular snowstorm, with gusts of wind, for up among the hills winter came early and lingered long. But the children were busy, gay, and warm indoors and never minded the rising gale nor the whirling white storm outside.

Tilly got them a good dinner, and when it was over, the two elder girls went to their spinning, for in the kitchen stood the big and little wheels and baskets of wool rolls, ready to be twisted into yarn for the winter's knitting, and each day brought its stint of work to the daughters, who hoped to be as thrifty as their mother.

Eph kept up a glorious fire and superintended the small boys, who popped corn and whittled boats on the hearth, while Roxy and Rhody dressed corncob dolls in the settle corner, and Bose, the brindled mastiff, lay on the braided mat, luxuriously warming his old legs. Thus employed, they made a pretty picture, these rosy boys and girls, in their homespun suits, with the rustic toys or tasks which most children nowadays would find very poor or tiresome.

Tilly and Prue sang, as they stepped to and fro, drawing out the smoothly twisted threads to the musical hum of the great spinning wheels. The little girls chattered like magpies over their dolls and the new bedspread they were planning to make, all

white dimity stars on a blue calico ground, as a Christmas present to mother. The boys roared at Eph's jokes and had rough and tumble games over Bose, who didn't mind them in the least; and so the afternoon wore pleasantly away.

At sunset the boys went out to feed the cattle, bring in heaps of wood, and lock up for the night, as the lonely farmhouse seldom had visitors after dark. The girls got the simple supper of brown bread and milk, baked apples, and a doughnut all 'round as a treat. Then they sat before the fire, the sisters knitting, the brothers with books or games, for Eph loved reading, and Sol and Seth never failed to play a few games of Morris with barley corns, on the little board they had made themselves at one corner of the dresser.

"Read out a piece," said Tilly, from Mother's chair, where she sat in state, finishing off the sixth woolen sock she had knit that month.

"It's the old history book, but here's a bit you may like, since it's about our folks," answered Eph, turning the yellow page to look at a picture of two quaintly dressed children in some ancient castle.

"Yes, read that. I always like to hear about the Lady Matildy I was named for and Lord Bassett, Pa's great-great-great-grandpa. He's only a farmer

now, but it's nice to know that we were somebody two or three hundred years ago," said Tilly, bridling and tossing her curly head as she fancied the Lady Matilda might have done.

"Don't read the queer words, 'cause we don't understand 'em. Tell it," commanded Roxy, from the cradle, where she was drowsily cuddled with Rhody.

"Well, a long time ago, when Charles the First was in prison, Lord Bassett was a true friend to him," began Eph, plunging into his story without delay. "The lord had some papers that would have hung a lot of people if the king's enemies got hold of 'em, so when he heard one day, all of a sudden, that soldiers were at the castle gate to carry him off, he had just time to call his girl to him, and say: 'I may be going to my death, but I won't betray my master. There is no time to burn the papers, and I cannot take them with me; they are hidden in the old leathern chair where I sit. No one knows this but you, and you must guard them till I come or send you a safe messenger to take them away. Promise me to be brave and silent, and I can go without fear.' You see, he wasn't afraid to die, but he *was* to seem a traitor. Lady Matilda promised solemnly, and the words were hardly out of her mouth when

"Read out a piece," said Tilly, from Mother's chair.

the men came in, and her father was carried away a prisoner and sent off to the Tower.

"But she didn't cry; she just called her brother, and sat down in that chair, with her head leaning back on those papers, like a queen, and waited while the soldiers hunted the house over for 'em. Wasn't that a smart girl?" cried Tilly, beaming with pride, for she was named for this ancestress and knew the story by heart.

"I reckon she was scared, though, when the men came swearin' in and asked her if she knew anything about it. The boy did his part then, for *he* didn't know and fired up and stood before his sister; and he says, says he, as bold as a lion: 'If my lord had told us where the papers be, we would die before we would betray him. But we are children and know nothing, and it is cowardly of you to try to fright us with oaths and drawn swords!' "

As Eph quoted from the book, Seth planted himself before Tilly, with the long poker in his hand, saying, as he flourished it valiantly:

"Why didn't the boy take his father's sword and lay about him? I would, if any one was ha'sh to Tilly."

"You bantam! He was only a bit of a boy and couldn't do anything. Sit down and hear the rest of

it," commanded Tilly, with a pat on the yellow head and a private resolve that Seth should have the largest piece of pie at dinner next day, as reward for his chivalry.

"Well, the men went off after turning the castle out of window, but they said they would come again, so faithful Matildy was full of trouble, and hardly dared to leave the room where the chair stood. All day she sat there, and at night her sleep was so full of fear about it, that she often got up and went to see that all was safe. The servants thought the fright had hurt her wits, and let her be, but Rupert, the boy, stood by her and never was afraid of her queer ways. She was 'a pious maid', the book says, and often spent the long evenings reading the Bible, with her brother by her, all alone in the great room, with no one to help her bear her secret and no good news of her father. At last, word came that the king was dead and his friends banished out of England. Then the poor children were in a sad plight, for they had no mother, and the servants all ran away, leaving only one faithful old man to help them."

"But the father did come?" cried Roxy eagerly.

"You'll see," continued Eph, half telling, half reading.

"Matilda was sure he would, so she sat on in the

big chair, guarding the papers, and no one could get her away, till one day a man came with her father's ring and told her to give up the secret. She knew the ring, but would not tell until she had asked many questions, so as to be very sure, and while the man answered all about her father and the king, she looked at him sharply. Then she stood up and said, in a tremble, for there was something strange about the man: 'Sir, I doubt you in spite of the ring, and I will not answer till you pull off the false beard you wear, that I may see your face and know if you are my father's friend or foe.' Off came the disguise, and Matilda found it was my lord himself, come to take them with him out of England. He was very proud of that faithful girl, I guess, for the old chair still stands in the castle, and the name keeps in the family, Pa says, even over here, where some of the Bassetts came along with the Pilgrims."

"Our Tilly would have been as brave, I know, and she looks like the old picter down to Grandma's, don't she, Eph?" cried Prue, who admired her bold, bright sister very much.

"Well, I think you'd do the settin' part best, Prue, you are so patient. Till would fight like a wildcat, but she can't hold her tongue worth a cent," an-

swered Eph; whereat Tilly pulled his hair, and the story ended with a general frolic.

When the moon-faced clock behind the door struck nine, Tilly tucked up the children under the "extry comfortables", and having kissed them all around, as Mother did, crept into her own nest, never minding the little drifts of snow that sifted in upon her coverlet between the shingles of the roof, nor the storm that raged without.

As if he felt the need of unusual vigilance, old Bose lay down on the mat before the door, and pussy had the warm hearth all to herself. If any late wanderer had looked in at midnight, he would have seen the fire blazing up again, and in the cheerful glow the old cat blinking her yellow eyes, as she sat bolt upright beside the spinning wheel, like some sort of household goblin guarding the children while they slept.

When they woke, like early birds, it still snowed, but up the little Bassetts jumped, broke the ice in their pitchers, and went down with cheeks glowing like winter apples, after a brisk scrub and scramble into their clothes. Eph was off to the barn, and Tilly soon had a great kettle of mush ready, which with milk, warm from the cows, made a wholesome breakfast for the seven hearty children.

"Now about dinner," said the young housekeeper, as the pewter spoons stopped clattering and the earthen bowls stood empty.

"Ma said, have what we liked, but she didn't expect us to have a real Thanksgiving dinner, because she won't be here to cook it, and we don't know how," began Prue, doubtfully.

"I can roast a turkey and make a pudding as well as anybody, I guess. The pies are all ready, and if we can't boil vegetables and so on, we don't deserve any dinner," cried Tilly, burning to distinguish herself and bound to enjoy to the utmost her brief authority.

"Yes, yes!" cried all the boys. "Let's have a dinner anyway. Ma won't care, and the good victuals will spoil if they aren't eaten right up."

"Pa is coming to-night, so we won't have dinner till late; that will be real genteel and give us plenty of time," added Tilly, suddenly realizing the novelty of the task she had undertaken.

"Did you ever roast a turkey?" asked Roxy, with an air of deep interest.

"Should you darst to try?" said Rhody, in an awe-stricken tone.

"You will see what I can do. Ma said I was to use my jedgment about things, and I'm going to.

All you children have got to do is to keep out of the way and let Prue and me work. Eph, I wish you'd put a fire in the best room, so the little ones can play in there. We shall want the settin' room for the table, and I won't have 'em pickin' 'round when we get things fixed," commanded Tilly, bound to make her short reign a brilliant one.

"I don't know about that; Ma didn't tell us to," began cautious Eph, who felt that this invasion of the sacred best parlor was a daring step.

"Don't we always do it Sundays and Thanksgivings? Wouldn't Ma wish the children kept safe and warm anyhow? Can I get up a nice dinner with four rascals under my feet all the time? Come, now, if you want roast turkey and onions, plum puddin' and mince pie, you'll have to do as I tell you, and be lively about it."

Tilly spoke with such spirit and her last suggestion was so irresistible that Eph gave in and, laughing good-naturedly, tramped away to heat up the best room, devoutly hoping that nothing serious would happen to punish such audacity.

The young folks delightedly trooped in to destroy the order of that prim apartment with housekeeping under the black horsehair sofa, "horseback riders" on the arms of the best rocking chair, and

an Indian war dance all over the well-waxed furniture. Eph, finding the society of the peaceful sheep and cows more to his mind than that of two excited sisters, lingered over his chores in the barn as long as posssible and left the girls in peace.

Now Tilly and Prue were in their glory, and as soon as the breakfast things were out of the way, they prepared for a grand cooking time. They were handy girls, though they had never heard of a cooking school, never touched a piano, and knew nothing of embroidery beyond the samplers which hung framed in the parlor, one ornamented with a pink mourner under a blue weeping willow; the other with this pleasing verse, each word being done in a different color, which gave the effect of a distracted rainbow:

> "This sampler neat was worked by me,
> In my twelfth year, Prudence B."

Both rolled up their sleeves, put on their largest aprons, and got out all the spoons, dishes, pots, and pans they could find, "so as to have everything handy," as Prue said.

"Now, sister, we'll have dinner at five; Pa will be here by that time if he is coming to-night, and be so surprised to find us all ready, for he won't have had

any very nice victuals if Gran'ma is so sick," said Tilly importantly. "I shall give the children a piece at noon" (Tilly meant luncheon) ; "doughnuts and cheese, with apple pie and cider, will please 'em. There's beans for Eph; he likes cold pork, so we won't stop to warm it up, for there's lots to do, and I don't mind saying to you I'm dreadful dubersome about the turkey."

"It's all ready but the stuffing, and roasting is as easy as can be. I can baste first rate. Ma always likes to have me. I'm so patient and stiddy, she says," answered Prue, for the responsibility of this great undertaking did not rest upon her, so she took a cheerful view of things.

"I know, but it's the stuffin' that troubles me," said Tilly, rubbing her round elbows as she eyed the immense fowl laid out on a platter before her. "I don't know how much I want, nor what sort of yarbs to put in, and he's so awful big, I'm kind of afraid of him."

"I'm not! I fed him all summer, and he never gobbled at *me*. I feel real mean to be thinking of gobbling him, poor old chap," laughed Prue, patting her departed pet with an air of mingled affection and appetite.

"Well, I'll get the puddin' off my mind fust, for

it ought to bile all day. Put the big kettle on, and see that the spit is clean, while I get ready."

Prue obediently tugged away at the crane, with its black hooks from which hung the iron teakettle and three-legged pot; then she settled the long spit in the grooves made for it in the tall andirons and put the dripping pan underneath, for in those days meat was roasted as it should be, not baked in ovens.

Meantime Tilly attacked the plum pudding. She felt pretty sure of coming out right here, for she had seen her mother do it so many times and it looked very easy. So in went suet and fruit, all sorts of spice, to be sure she got the right ones, and brandy instead of wine. But she forgot both sugar and salt and tied it in the cloth so tightly that it had no room to swell and would come out as heavy as lead and as hard as a cannon ball, if the bag did not burst and spoil it all. Happily unconscious of these mistakes, Tilly popped it into the pot and proudly watched it bobbing about before she put the cover on and left it to its fate.

"I can't remember what flavorin' Ma puts in," she said, when she had got her bread well soaked for the stuffing. "Sage and onions and apple sauce go with goose, but I can't feel sure of anything but pepper and salt for a turkey."

"Ma puts in some kind of mint, I know, but I forget whether it is spearmint, peppermint, or pennyroyal," answered Prue, in a tone of doubt, but trying to show her knowledge of "yarbs", or, at least, of their names.

"Seems to me it's sweet marjoram or summer savory. I guess we'll put both in, and then we are sure to be right. The best is up garret; you run and get some, while I mash the bread," commanded Tilly, diving into the mess.

Away trotted Prue, but in her haste she got catnip and wormwood, for the garret was darkish and Prue's little nose was so full of the smell of the onions she had been peeling that everything smelled of them. Eager to be of use, she pounded up the herbs and scattered the mixture with a liberal hand into the bowl.

"It doesn't smell just right, but I suppose it will when it is cooked," said Tilly, as she filled the empty stomach, that seemed aching for food, and sewed it up with the blue yarn, which happened to be handy. She forgot to tie down his legs and wings, but she set him by till his hour came, well satisfied with her work.

"Shall we roast the little pig, too? I think he'd look nice with a necklace of sausages, as Ma fixed

one last Christmas," asked Prue, elated with their success.

"I couldn't do it. I loved that little pig and cried when he was killed. I should feel as if I was roasting the baby," answered Tilly, glancing toward the buttery where piggy hung, looking so pink and pretty it certainly did seem cruel to eat him.

It took a long time to get all the vegetables ready, for, as the cellar was full, the girls thought they would have every sort. Eph helped, and by noon all was ready for cooking, and the cranberry sauce, a good deal scorched, was cooling in the lean-to.

Luncheon was a lively meal, and doughnuts and cheese vanished in such quantities that Tilly feared no one would have an appetite for her sumptuous dinner. The boys assured her they would be starving by five o'clock, and Sol mourned bitterly over the little pig that was not to be served up.

"Now you all go and coast, while Prue and I set the table and get out the best chiny," said Tilly, bent on having her dinner look well, no matter what its other failings might be.

Out came the rough sleds; on went the round hoods, old hats, red cloaks, and moccasins; and away trudged the four younger Bassetts, to disport themselves in the snow and try the ice down by the old

mill, where the great wheel turned and splashed so merrily in the summer time.

Eph took his fiddle and scraped away to his heart's content in the parlor, while the girls, after a short rest, set the table and made all ready to dish up the dinner when that exciting moment came. It was not at all the sort of table we see now, but would look very plain and countrified to us, with its green-handled knives and two-pronged steel forks, its red-and-white china and pewter platters, scoured till they shone, with mugs and spoons to match, and a brown jug for the cider. The cloth was coarse, but white as snow, and the little maids had seen the blue-eyed flax grow, out of which their mother wove the linen; they had watched and watered the linen while it bleached in the green meadow. They had no napkins and little silver; but the best tankard and Ma's few wedding spoons were set forth in state. Nuts and apples at the corners gave an air, and the place of honor was left in the middle for the oranges yet to come.

"Don't it look beautiful?" said Prue, when they paused to admire the general effect.

"Pretty nice, I think. I wish Ma could see how well we can do it," began Tilly, when a loud howling startled both girls and sent them flying to the

window. The short afternoon had passed so quickly that twilight had come before they knew it, and now, as they looked out through the gathering dusk, they saw four small black figures tearing up the road, to come bursting in, all screaming at once: "The bear, the bear! Eph, get the gun! He's coming! He's coming!"

Eph had dropped his fiddle and got down his gun before the girls could calm the children enough for them to tell their story, which they did in a somewhat incoherent manner. "Down in the holler, coastin', we heard a growl," began Sol, with his eyes as big as saucers. "I see him fust lookin' over the wall," roared Seth, eager to get his share of honor.

"Awful big and shaggy," quavered Roxy, clinging to Tilly, while Rhody hid in Prue's skirts and piped out: "His great paws kept clawing at us, and I was so scared my legs would hardly go."

"We ran away as fast as we could go, and he come growling after us. He's awful hungry, and he'll eat every one of us if he gets in," continued Sol, looking about him for a safe retreat.

"Oh, Eph, don't let him eat us," cried both little girls, flying upstairs to hide under their mother's bed, as their surest shelter.

"No danger of that, you little geese. I'll shoot

him as soon as he comes. Get out of the way, boys," and Eph raised the window to get good aim.

"There he is! Fire away, and don't miss!" cried Seth, hastily following Sol, who had climbed to the top of the dresser as a good perch from which to view the approaching fray.

Prue retired to the hearth as if bent on dying at her post rather than deserting the turkey, now "browning beautiful", as she expressed it. But Tilly boldly stood at the open window, ready to lend a hand if the enemy proved too much for Eph.

All had seen bears, but none had ever come so near before, and even brave Eph felt that the big brown beast slowly trotting up the dooryard was an unusually formidable specimen. He was growling horribly and stopped now and then as if to rest and shake himself.

"Get the ax, Tilly, and if I should miss, stand ready to keep him off while I load again," said Eph, anxious to kill his first bear in style and alone; a girl's help didn't count.

Tilly flew for the ax and was at her brother's side by the time the bear was near enough to be dangerous. He stood on his hind legs and seemed to sniff with relish the savory odors that poured out of the window.

"Fire, Eph!" cried Tilly, firmly.

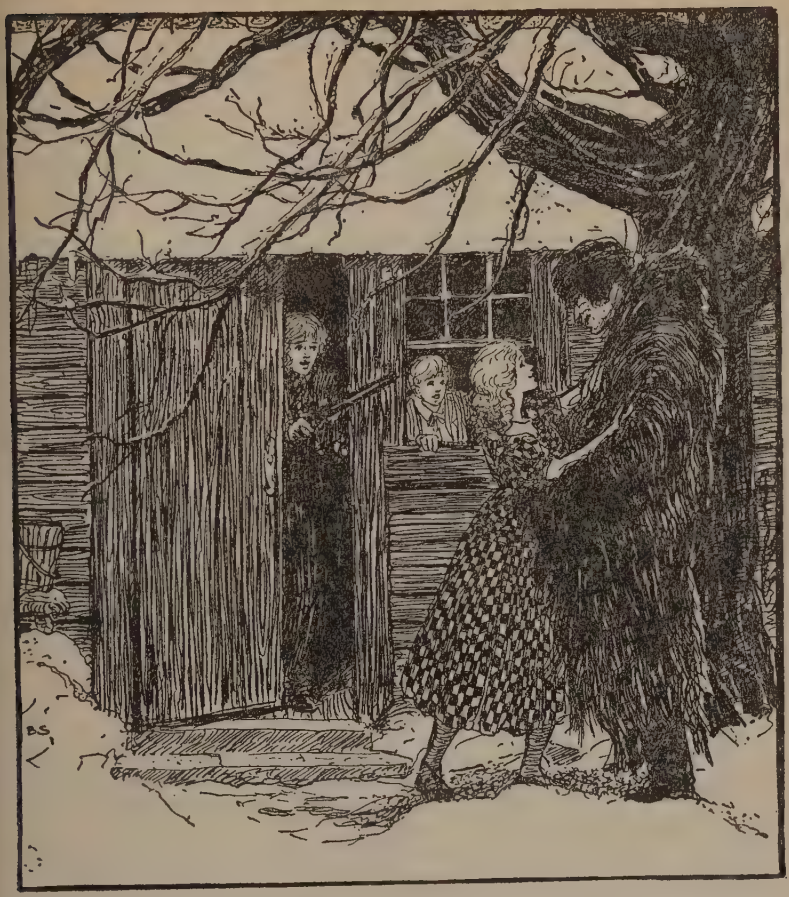
"Wait till he rears again. I'll get a better shot then," answered the boy, while Prue covered her ears to shut out the bang and the small boys cheered from their dusty refuge up among the pumpkins.

But a very singular thing happened next, and all who saw it stood amazed, for suddenly Tilly threw down the ax, flung open the door, and ran straight into the arms of the bear, who stood erect to receive her, while his growlings changed to a loud "haw-haw" that startled the children more than the report of a gun.

"It's Gad Hopkins, tryin' to fool us!" cried Eph, much disgusted at the loss of his prey, for these hardy boys loved to hunt and prided themselves on the number of wild animals and birds they could shoot in a year.

"Oh, Gad, how could you scare us so?" laughed Tilly, still held fast in one shaggy arm of the bear, while the other drew a dozen oranges from some deep pocket in the buffalo-skin coat and fired them into the kitchen with such good aim that Eph ducked, Prue screamed, and Sol and Seth came down much quicker than they went up.

"Wal, you see I got upsot over yonder, and the old horse went home while I was floundering in a



drift, so I tied on the buffalers to tote 'em easy, and come along till I see the children playin' in the holler. I jest meant to give 'em a little scare, but they run like partridges, and I kep' up the joke to see how Eph would like this sort of company," and Gad "haw-hawed" again.

"You'd have had a warm welcome if we hadn't found you out. I'd have put a bullet through you in a jiffy, old chap," said Eph, coming out to shake hands with the young giant, who was only a year or two older than himself.

"Come in and set up to dinner with us. Prue and I have done it all ourselves, and Pa will be along soon, I reckon," cried Tilly, trying to escape.

"Couldn't, no ways. My folks will think I'm dead ef I don't get along home, sence the horse and sleigh have gone ahead empty. I've done my arrant and had my joke; now I want my pay, Tilly," and Gad took a hearty kiss from the rosy cheeks of his "little sweetheart", as he called her. His own cheeks tingled with the smart slap she gave him as she ran away, calling out that she hated bears and would bring her ax next time.

"I ain't afeared; your sharp eyes found me out; and ef you run into a bear's arms, you must expect a hug," answered Gad, as he pushed back the robe and settled his fur cap more becomingly.

"I should have known you in a minute if I hadn't been asleep when the girls squalled. You did it well, though, and I advise you not to try it again in a hurry, or you'll get shot," said Eph, as they parted, he rather crestfallen and Gad in high glee.

"My sakes alive — the turkey is burnt one side, and the kettles have biled over so the pies I put to warm are all ashes!" scolded Tilly, as the flurry subsided and she remembered her dinner.

"Well, I can't help it. I couldn't think of victuals when I expected to be eaten alive myself, could I?" pleaded poor Prue, who had tumbled into the cradle when the rain of oranges began.

Tilly laughed, and all the rest joined in, so good humor was restored and the spirits of the younger ones were revived by sucks from the one orange which passed from hand to hand with great rapidity, while the older girls dished up the dinner. They were just struggling to get the pudding out of the cloth when Roxy called out, "Here's Pa!"

"There's folks with him," added Rhody.

"Lots of 'em! I see two big sleighs chock full," shouted Seth, peering through the dusk.

"It looks like a cemetery. Guess gran'ma's dead and come up to be buried here," said Sol in a solemn tone. This startling suggestion made Tilly, Prue, and Eph hasten to look out, full of dismay at such an ending of their festival.

"If that is a funeral, the mourners are uncommon jolly," said Eph, dryly, as merry voices and loud laughter broke the white silence without.

"I see Aunt Cinthy and Cousin Hetty — and there's Mose and Amos. I do declare, Pa's bringin' 'em all home to have some fun here," cried Prue, as she recognized one familiar face after another.

"Oh, my patience! How glad I am I got dinner, and don't I hope it will turn out good!" exclaimed Tilly, while the twins pranced with delight, and the small boys roared:

"Hooray for Pa! Hooray for Thanksgivin'!"

The cheer was answered heartily, and in came Father, Mother, Baby, aunts, and cousins, all in great spirits, and all much surprised to find such a festive welcome awaiting them.

"Isn't gran'ma dead at all?" asked Sol, in the midst of the kissing and hand-shaking.

"Bless your heart, no! It was all a mistake of old Mr. Chadwick's. He's as deaf as an adder, and when Mrs. Brooks told him Mother was mendin' fast and she wanted me to come down to-day certain sure, he got the message all wrong and give it to the fust person passin' in such a way as to scare me 'most to death and send us down in a hurry. Mother was sittin' up as chirk as you please and dreadful sorry you didn't all come."

"So, to keep the house quiet for her and give you a taste of the fun, your Pa fetched us all up to spend

the evenin', and we are goin' to have a jolly time of it, to jedge by the looks of things," said Aunt Cinthy, briskly finishing the tale when Mrs. Bassett paused for want of breath.

"What in the world put it into your head we was comin' and set you to gettin' up such a supper?" asked Mr. Bassett, looking about him, well pleased and much surprised at the plentiful table.

Tilly modestly began to tell, but the others broke in and sang her praises in a sort of chorus, in which bears, pigs, pies, and oranges were oddly mixed. Great satisfaction was expressed by all, and Tilly and Prue were so elated by the commendation of mother and the aunts that they set forth their dinner, sure everything was perfect.

But when the eating began, which it did the moment wraps were off, then their pride got a fall; for the first person who tasted the stuffing (it was big Cousin Mose, and that made it harder to bear) nearly choked over the bitter morsel.

"Tilly Bassett, whatever made you put wormwood and catnip in your stuffin'?" demanded Mother, trying not to be severe, for all the rest were laughing, and Tilly looked ready to cry.

"I did it," said Prue, nobly taking all the blame, which caused Father to kiss her on the spot and

declare that it didn't do a might of harm, for the turkey was all right.

"I never see onions cooked better. All the vegetables is well done, and the dinner a credit to you, my dears," declared Aunt Cinthy, with her mouth full of the fragrant vegetable she praised.

The pudding was an utter failure, in spite of the blazing brandy in which it lay — as hard and heavy as one of the stone balls on Squire Dunkin's great gate. It was speedily whisked out of sight, and all fell upon the pies, which were perfect. But Tilly and Prue were much depressed and didn't recover their spirits till the dinner was over and the evening fun well under way.

"Blindman's Buff," "Hunt the Slipper," "Come, Philanderer," and other lively games soon set every one bubbling over with jollity, and when Eph struck up "Money Musk" on his fiddle, old and young fell into their places for a dance. All down the long kitchen they stood, Mr. and Mrs. Bassett at the top, the twins at the bottom, and then away they went, heeling and toeing, cutting pigeon wings and taking their steps in a way that would convulse modern children with their new-fangled romps called dancing. Mose and Tilly covered themselves with glory by the vigor with which they kept it up, till fat Aunt

Cinthy fell into a chair, breathlessly declaring that a very little of such exercise was enough for a woman of her "heft."

Apples and cider, chat and singing, finished the evening, and after a grand kissing all round, the guests drove away in the clear moonlight, which came just in time to cheer their long drive.

When the jingle of the last bell had died away, Mr. Bassett said soberly, as they stood together on the hearth: "Children, we have special cause to be thankful that the sorrow we expected was changed into joy; so we'll read a chapter 'fore we go to bed, and give thanks where thanks is due."

Then Tilly set out the light stand with the big Bible on it and a candle on each side, and all sat quietly in the firelight, smiling as they listened with happy hearts to the sweet old words that fit all times and seasons so beautifully.

When the good-nights were over and the children in bed, Prue put her arm around Tilly and whispered tenderly, for she felt her shake and was sure she was crying:

"Don't mind about the old stuffin' and puddin', deary — nobody cared, and Mother said we really did do surprisin' well for such young girls."

The laughter Tilly was trying to smother broke

out then and was so infectious, Prue could not help joining her, even before she knew the cause of the merriment.

"I was mad about the mistakes, but don't care enough to cry. I'm laughing to think how Gad fooled Eph and I found him out. I thought Mose and Amos would die over it when I told them, it was so funny," explained Tilly, when she got her breath.

"I was so scared that when the first orange hit me I thought it was a bullet and scrabbled into the cradle as fast as I could. It was real mean to frighten the little ones so," laughed Prue, as Tilly gave a growl.

Here a smart rap on the wall of the next room caused a sudden lull in the fun, and Mrs. Bassett's voice was heard, saying warningly, "Girls, go to sleep immediate, or you'll wake the baby."

"Yes'm," answered two meek voices, and after a few irrepressible giggles, silence reigned, broken only by an occasional snore from the boys, or the soft scurry of mice in the buttery taking their part in this old-fashioned Thanksgiving.

KATE'S CHOICE

WELL, what do you think of her?"

"I think she's a perfect dear, and not a bit stuck up with all her money."

"A real little lady, and ever so pretty."

"She kissed me lots, and doesn't tell me to run away, so I love her."

The group of brothers and sisters standing round the fire laughed as little May finished the chorus of praise with these crowning virtues.

Tall Alf asked the question and seemed satisfied with the general approval of the new cousin just come from England to live with them. They had often heard of Kate and rather prided themselves on the fact that she lived in a fine house, was very rich, and sent them charming presents. Now pity was added to the pride, for Kate was an orphan, and all her money could not buy back the parents she had lost. They had watched impatiently for her arrival, had welcomed her cordially, and after a day spent in trying to make her feel at home they were comparing notes in the twilight, while Kate was having a quiet talk with mamma.

"I hope she will choose to live with us. You know she can go to any of the uncles she likes best," said Alf.

"We are nearer her age than any of the other cousins, and papa is the oldest uncle, so I guess she will," added Milly, the fourteen-year-old daughter of the house.

"She said she liked America," said quiet Frank.

"Wonder if she will give us a lot of her money?" put in practical Fred, who was always in debt.

"Stop that!" commanded Alf. "Mind now, if you ever ask her for a penny, I'll shake you out of your jacket."

"Hush! she's coming," cried Milly, and a dead silence followed the lively chatter.

A fresh-faced, bright-eyed girl of fifteen came quietly in, glanced at the group on the rug, and paused as if doubtful whether she was wanted.

"Come on!" said Fred, encouragingly.

"Shall I be in the way?"

"Oh, dear, no! We were only talking," answered Milly, drawing her cousin nearer with an arm about her waist.

"It sounded like something pleasant," said Kate, not exactly knowing what to say.

"We were talking about you," began little May,

when a poke from Frank made her stop to ask, "What's that for? We *were* talking about Kate, and we all said we liked her, so it's no matter if I do tell."

"You are very kind," and Kate looked so pleased that the children forgave May's awkward frankness.

"Yes, and we hoped you'd like us and stay with us," said Alf, in the lofty and polite manner which he thought became the young lord of the house.

"I am going to try all the uncles in turn, and then decide; papa wished it," answered Kate, with a sudden tremble of the lips, for her father was the only parent she could remember and had been unusually dear for that reason.

"Can you play billiards?" asked Fred, who had a horror of seeing girls cry.

"Yes, and I'll teach you."

"You had a pony carriage at your house, didn't you?" added Frank, eager to help on the good work.

"At grandma's — I had no other home, you know," answered Kate.

"What shall you buy first with your money?" asked May, who *would* ask improper questions.

"I'd buy a grandma if I could," and Kate both smiled and sighed.

"How funny! We have one somewhere, but we don't care much about her," continued May, with the inconvenient candor of a child.

"Have you? Where is she?" and Kate turned quickly, looking full of interest.

"Papa's mother is very old and lives ever so far away in the country, so of course we don't see much of her," explained Alf.

"But papa writes sometimes, and mamma sends her things every Christmas. We don't remember her much, because we never saw her but once, ever so long ago; but we do care for her, and May mustn't say such rude things," said Milly.

"I shall go and see her. I can't get on without a grandmother," and Kate smiled so brightly that the lads thought her prettier than ever. "Tell me more about her. Is she a dear old lady?"

"Don't know. She is lame, and lives in the old house, and has a maid named Dolly, and — that's all I can tell you about her," and Milly looked a little vexed that she could say no more on the subject that seemed to interest her cousin so much.

Kate looked surprised, but said nothing and stood looking at the fire as if turning the matter over in her mind and trying to answer the question she was too polite to ask — how could they live without a

grandmother? Here the tea bell rang, and the flock ran laughing downstairs; but, though she said no more, Kate remembered that conversation and laid a plan in her resolute little mind which she carried out when the time came.

According to her father's wish she lived for a while in the family of each of the four uncles before she decided with which she would make her home. All were anxious to have her, one because of her money, another because her great-grandfather had been a lord, a third hoped to secure her for his son, while the fourth and best family loved her for herself alone. They were worthy people, as the world goes — busy, ambitious, and prosperous; and every one, old and young, was fond of bright, pretty, generous Kate. Each family was anxious to keep her, a little jealous of the rest, and very eager to know which she would choose.

But Kate surprised them all by saying decidedly when the time came:

"I must see grandma before I choose. Perhaps I ought to have visited her first, as she is the oldest. I think papa would wish me to do it. At any rate, I want to pay my duty to her before I settle anywhere, so please let me go."

Some of the young cousins laughed at the idea

and her old-fashioned, respectful way of putting it, which contrasted strongly with their free and easy American speech. The uncles were surprised, but agreed to humor her whim, and Uncle George, the eldest, said softly:

"I ought to have remembered that poor Anna was mother's only daughter, and the old lady would naturally love to see the girl. But, my dear, it will be desperately dull. Only two old women and a quiet country town. No fun, no company. You won't stay long."

"I shall not mind the dullness if grandma likes to have me there. I lived very quietly in England and was never tired of it. Nursey can take care of me, and I think the sight of me will do the dear old lady good, because they tell me I am like mamma."

Something in the earnest young face reminded Uncle George of the sister he had almost forgotten and recalled his own youth so pleasantly that he said, with a caress of the curly head beside him:

"So it would, I'm sure of it, and I've a great mind to go with you and 'pay my duty' to mother, as you prettily express it."

"Oh, no, please don't, sir; I want to surprise her and have her all to myself for a little while. Would

you mind if I went quite alone with Nursey? You can come later."

"Not a bit; you shall do as you like and make sunshine for the old lady as you have for us. I haven't seen her for a year, but I know she is well and comfortable, and Dolly guards her like a dragon. Give her my love, Kitty, and tell her I send her something she will value a hundred times more than the very best tea, the finest cap, or the handsomest tabby that ever purred."

So, in spite of the lamentations of her cousins, Kate went gayly away to find the grandma whom no one else seemed to value as she did.

You see, grandpa had been a farmer and lived contentedly on the old place until he died; but his four sons wanted to be something better, so they went away one after the other to make their way in the world. All worked hard, became rich, lived splendidly, and forgot as far as possible the old life and the dull old place they came from. They were good sons in their way, and had each offered his mother a home with him if she cared to come. But grandma clung to the old home, the simple ways, and quiet life, and thanking them gratefully, she had remained in the big farmhouse, empty, lonely,

and plain though it was, compared to the fine homes of her sons.

Little by little the busy men forgot the quiet, uncomplaining old mother, who spent her years thinking of them, longing to see and know their children, hoping they would one day remember how she loved them all and how solitary her life must be.

Now and then they wrote or paid her a hasty visit, and all sent gifts of far less value to her than one loving look, one hour of dutiful, affectionate companionship.

"If you ever want me, send and I'll come. Or, if you ever need a home, remember the old place is always open and you are always welcome," the good old lady said. But they never seemed to need her and so seldom came that the old place evidently had no charm for them.

It was hard, but the sweet old woman bore it patiently and lived her lonely life quietly and usefully, with her faithful maid Dolly to serve and love and support her.

Kate's mother, her one daughter, had married young, gone to England, and, dying early, had left the child to its father and his family. Among them little Kate had grown up, knowing scarcely anything of her American relations until she was left

an orphan and went back to her mother's people. She had been the pet of her English grandmother, and, finding all the aunts busy, fashionable women, had longed for the tender fostering she had known and now felt as if only grandmothers could give.

With a flutter of hope and expectation, she approached the old house after the long journey was over. Leaving the luggage at the inn and accompanied by faithful Nurse, Kate went up the village street and, pausing at the gate, looked at the home where her mother had been born.

A large, old-fashioned farmhouse, it was, with a hospitable porch and tall trees in front, an orchard behind, and a capital hill for blackberries in summer and coasting in winter, close by. All the upper windows were curtained and made the house look as if it was half asleep. At one of the lower windows sat a portly puss, blinking in the sun, and at the other appeared a cap, a regular grandmotherly old cap, with a little black bow perked up behind. Something in the lonely look of the house and the pensive droop of that cap made Kate hurry up the walk and tap eagerly at the antique knocker. A brisk little old woman peered out, as if startled at the sound, and Kate asked, smiling, "Does Madam Coverley live here?"

"She does, dear. Walk right in," and throwing wide the door, the maid trotted down a long, wide hall and announced in a low tone to her mistress:

"A nice, pretty little girl wants to see you, mum."

"I shall love to see a young face. Who is it, Dolly?" asked a pleasant voice.

"Don't know, mum."

"Grandma, just guess," and Kate went straight up to the old lady with both hands out, for the first sight of that sweet old face won her heart.

Lifting her spectacles, grandma looked silently a minute, then opened her arms without a word, and in the long embrace that followed Kate felt assured that she was welcome in the home she wanted.

"So like my Anna! And this is her little girl? God bless you, my darling! So good to come and see me!" said the old lady when she could speak.

"Why, grandma, I couldn't get on without you, and as soon as I knew where to find you, I was in a fidget to be off; but I had to do my other visits first, because the uncles had planned it so. This is Dolly, I am sure, and that is my good nurse. Go and get my things, please, Nursey. I shall stay here until grandma sends me away."

"That will never be, deary. Now tell me everything. It is like an angel coming to see me all of a

sudden. Sit close, and let me feel sure it isn't one of the dreams I make to cheer myself when I'm lonesome."

Kate sat on a little stool at grandma's feet and, leaning on her knee, told all her little story, while the old lady fed her hungry eyes with the sight of the fresh young face, listened to the music of a loving voice, and felt the happy certainty that some-

one had remembered her, as she longed to be remembered.

Such a happy day as Kate spent talking and listening, looking at her new home, which she found delightful, and being petted by the two old women, who would hardly let Nursey do anything for her. Kate's quick eyes read the truth of grandma's lonely life very soon; her warm heart was full of tender pity, and she resolved to devote herself to making happiness for the dear old lady's few remaining years, for at eighty one should have the prop of loving children, if ever.

To Dolly and Madam it really did seem as if an angel had come, a singing, smiling, chattering sprite, who danced all over the old house, making blithe echoes in the silent room and brightening every corner she entered.

Kate opened all the shutters and let in the sun, saying she must see which room she liked best before she settled. She played on the old piano, which wheezed and jangled, all out of tune; but no one minded, for the girlish voice was as sweet as a lark's. She invaded Dolly's sacred kitchen and messed to her heart's content, delighting the old soul by praises of her skill and petitions to be taught all she knew. She pranced to and fro in the long hall, and

became acquainted with the lives of painted ancestors hanging there in big wigs or short-waisted gowns. She took possession of grandma's little parlor and made it so cozy the old lady felt as if she was bewitched, for cushioned armchairs, fur footstools, soft rugs, and delicate warm shawls appeared like magic. Flowers bloomed in the deep, sunny window seats, pictures of lovely places seemed to break out on the oaken walls, a dainty work basket took its place near grandma's quaint one, and best of all, the little chair beside her own was seldom empty now.

The first thing in the morning a kiss wakened her, and the beloved voice gave her a gay "Good-morning, grandma dear!" All day Anna's child hovered about her with willing hands and feet to serve her, loving heart to return her love and the tender reverence which is the beautiful tribute the young should pay the old. In the twilight, the bright head always was at her knees; and in either listening to the stories of the past or making lively plans for the future, Kate whiled away the time that used to be so sad.

Kate never found it lonely, seldom wished for other society, and grew every day more certain that here she could find the cherishing she needed and do the good she hoped.

Dolly and Nurse were on capital terms; each tried to see which could sing "Little Missy's" praises loudest and spoil her quickest by unquestioning obedience to every whim or wish. A happy family, and the dull November days went by so fast that Christmas was at hand before they knew it.

All the uncles had written to ask Kate to pass the holidays with them, feeling sure she must be longing for a change. But she had refused them all, saying she would stay with grandma, who could not go anywhere to join other people's merrymakings and must have one of her own at home. The uncles urged; the aunts advised; and the cousins teased; but Kate denied them all, yet offended no one, for she was inspired by a grand idea and carried it out with help from Dolly and Nurse, unsuspected by grandma.

"We are going to have a little Christmas fun up here among ourselves, and you mustn't know about it until we are ready. So just sit all cozy in your corner, and let me riot about as I like. I know you won't mind, and I think you'll say it is splendid when I've carried out my plan," said Kate, when the old lady wondered what she was thinking about so deeply, with her brows knit and her lips smiling.

"Very well, dear, do anything you like, and I shall enjoy it, only don't get tired, or try to do too much," and with that grandma became deaf and blind to the mysteries that went on about her.

She was lame and seldom left her own rooms; so Kate, with her devoted helpers, turned the house topsy- turvy, trimmed up hall and parlors and great dining room with shining holly and evergreen, laid fires ready for kindling on the hearths that had been cold for years, and had beds made up all over the house.

What went on in the kitchen, only Dolly could tell; but such delicious odors as stole out made grandma sniff the air and think of merry Christmas revels long ago. Up in her own room Kate wrote lots of letters and sent orders to the city that made Nursey hold up her hands. More letters came in reply, and Kate had a rapture over every one. Big bundles were left by the expressman, who came so often that the gates were opened and the lawn soon full of sleigh-tracks. The shops in the village were ravaged by Mistress Kate, who laid in stores of gay ribbon, toys, nuts, and all manner of queer things.

"I really think she's lost her mind," said the postmaster as she flew out of the office one day with a handful of letters.

"Pretty creter! I wouldn't say a word against her, not for a mint of money. She's so good to old Mrs. Coverley," answered his fat wife, smiling as she watched Kate ride up the village street on an ox sled.

If grandma had thought the girl out of her wits, no one could have blamed her, for on Christmas day she really did behave in the most singular manner.

"You are going to church with me this morning, grandma. It's all arranged. A closed sleigh is coming for us; the sleighing is lovely, the church all trimmed up, and I must have you see it. I shall wrap you in fur, and we will go and say our prayers together, like good girls, won't we?" said Kate, who was in a queer flutter, while her eyes shone, her lips were all smiles, and her feet kept dancing in spite of her.

"Anywhere you like, my darling. I'd start for Australia to-morrow, if you wanted me to go with you," answered grandma, who obeyed Kate in all things and seemed to think she could do no wrong.

So they went to church, and grandma did enjoy it, for she had many blessings to thank God for, chief among them the treasure of a dutiful, loving child. Kate tried to keep herself quiet, but the odd

little flutter would not subside and seemed to get worse and worse as time went on. It increased rapidly as they drove home, and when grandma was safe in her little parlor again, Kate's hands trembled so she could hardly tie the strings of the old lady's state and festival cap.

"We must take a look in the big parlor. It is all trimmed up, and I have my presents in there. Is it ready, Dolly?" asked Kate, as the old servant appeared, looking so excited that grandma said, laughing:

"We have been quiet so long, poor Dolly doesn't know what to make of a little gayety."

"Lord bless us, my dear mum! It's all so beautiful and kinder surprisin'. I feel as ef merrycles had come to pass agin," answered Dolly, actually wiping away tears with her best apron.

"Come, grandma," and Kate offered her arm. "Doesn't she look sweet and dear?" she added, smoothing the soft, silken shawl about the old lady's shoulders and kissing the placid old face that beamed at her from under the new cap.

"I always said Madam was the finest old lady a-goin', ef folks only knew it. Now, Missy, ef you don't make haste, that parlor door will bust open

and spoil the surprise, for they are just bilin' over in there," with which mysterious remark Dolly vanished, giggling.

Across the hall they went, but at the door Kate paused, and said with a look grandma never forgot:

"I hope I have done right. I hope you'll like my present and not find it too much for you. At any rate, remember I meant to please you and give you the thing you need and long for most, my dear old grandma."

"My good child, don't be afraid. I shall like anything you do and thank you for your thought of me. What a curious noise! I hope the fire hasn't fallen down."

Without another word, Kate threw open the door and led grandma in. Only a step or two — for the old lady stopped short and stared about her, as if she didn't know her own best parlor. No wonder she didn't, for it was full of people, and such people! All her sons, their wives, and children rose as she came in, and turned to greet her with smiling faces. Uncle George went up and kissed her, saying, with a choke in his voice, "A merry Christmas, mother!" and everybody echoed the words in a chorus of good will that went straight to the heart.

Poor grandma could not bear it and sat down in her big chair, trembling and sobbing like a little child. Kate hung over her, fearing the surprise had been too much; but joy seldom kills, and presently the old lady was calm enough to look up and welcome them all by stretching out her feeble hands and saying, brokenly yet heartily:

"God bless you, my children! This *is* a merry Christmas, indeed! Now tell me all about it, and who everybody is; for I don't know half the little ones."

Then Uncle George explained that it was Kate's plan, and told how she had made every one agree to it, pleading so eloquently for grandma that all other plans were given up. They had arrived while she was at church and had been with difficulty kept from bursting out before the time.

"Do you like your present?" whispered Kate, quite calm and happy now that the grand surprise was safely over.

Grandma answered with a silent kiss that said more than the warmest words, and then Kate put every one at ease by leading up the children, one by one, and introducing each with some lively speech. Everybody enjoyed this and became acquainted quickly; for grandma thought the children the most

remarkable she had ever seen, and the little people soon made up their minds that an old lady who had such a very nice, big house and such a dinner waiting for them (of course they had peeped everywhere) was a most desirable and charming grandma.

By the time the first raptures were over Dolly and Nurse and Betsey Jane (a girl hired for the occasion) had dinner on the table, and the procession, headed by Madam proudly escorted by her eldest son, filed into the dining room where such a party had not met for years.

It would be quite impossible to do justice to that dinner; pen and ink are not equal to it. I can only say that every one partook copiously of everything, that they laughed and talked, told stories, and sang songs; and when no one could do any more, Uncle George proposed grandma's health, which was drunk standing and followed by three cheers. Then up got the old lady, quite rosy and young, excited and gay, and said in a clear strong voice:

"I give you in return the best of grandchildren, little Kate."

I give you my word the cheer they gave grandma was nothing to the shout that followed these words, for the old lady led off with amazing vigor, and the boys roared so tremendously that the sedate tabby

in the kitchen flew off her cushion, nearly frightened into a fit.

After that, the elders sat with grandma in the parlor, while the younger part of the flock trooped after Kate all over the house. Fires burned everywhere, and the long unused toys of their fathers were brought out for their amusement. The big nursery was full of games, and here Nursey collected the little ones when the larger boys and girls were invited by Kate to go out and coast. Sleds had been provided, and until dusk they kept it up, the city girls getting as gay and rosy as Kate herself in this healthy sport, while the lads frolicked to their hearts' content, building snow forts, pelting one another, and carousing generally without any policeman to interfere or any stupid old ladies to get upset, as at home in the park.

A cozy tea and a dance in the long hall followed, and they were just thinking what they could do next when Kate's second surprise came.

There were two great fireplaces in the hall: up the chimney by one roared a jolly fire, but the other was closed by a tall fire board. As they sat about, resting after a brisk contra dance, a queer rustling and tapping was heard behind this fire board.

"Rats!" suggested the girls, jumping up into the chairs.

"Let's have 'em out!" added the boys, making straight for the spot, intent on fun.

But before they reached there, a muffled voice cried, "Stand from under!" and down went the board with a crash, out bounced Santa Claus, startling the lads as much as the rumor of rats had the girls.

A jolly old saint he was, all in fur, with sleigh bells jingling from his waist and the point of his high cap, big boots, a white beard, and a nose as red as if Jack Frost had had a good tweak at it. Giving himself a shake that set all the bells ringing, he stepped out upon the hearth, saying in a half-gruff, half-merry tone:

"I call this a most inhospitable way to receive me! What do you mean by stopping up my favorite chimney? Never mind, I'll forgive you, for this is an unusual occasion. Here, some of you fellows, lend a hand and help me out with my sack."

A dozen pair of hands had the great bag out in a minute and, lugging it to the middle of the hall, left it beside St. Nick, while the boys fell back into the eager, laughing crowd that surrounded the newcomer.

"Where's my girl? I want my Kate," said the saint, and when she went to him, he took a base advantage of his years and kissed her in spite of the beard.

"That's not fair," whispered Kate, as rosy as the holly berries in her hair.

"Can't help it — must have some reward for sticking in that horrid chimney so long," answered Santa Claus, looking as roguish as any boy. Then he added aloud, "I have something for everybody, so make a big ring, and the good fairy will hand round the gifts."

With that he dived into his bag and brought out treasure after treasure, some fine, some funny, many useful, and all appropriate, for the good fairy seemed to have guessed what each one wanted. Shouts of laughter greeted the droll remarks of the jolly saint, for he had a joke about everything, and people were quite exhausted by the time the bottom of the sack was reached.

"Now, then, a rousing good game of blindman's buff, and then this little family must go to bed, for it's past eleven."

As he spoke, the saint cast off his cap and beard, fur coat, and big boots and proceeded to dance a double shuffle with great vigor and skill, while the

little ones, who had been thoroughly mystified, shouted, "Why, it's Alf!" and fell upon him *en masse* as the best way of expressing their delight at his successful performance of that immortal part.

The game of blindman's buff that followed was a "rouser" in every sense of the word, for the gentlemen joined, and the children flew about like a flock of chickens when hawks are abroad. Such peals of laughter, such shouts of fun, and such racing and scrambling that old hall had never seen before. Kate was so hunted that she finally took refuge behind grandma's chair and stood there looking at the lively scene, her face full of happiness as she remembered that it was her work.

The going to bed that night was the best joke of all, for though Kate's arrangements were peculiar, every one voted that they were capital. There were many rooms, but not enough for all to have one apiece. So the uncles and aunts had the four big chambers, all the boys were ordered into the great playroom, where beds were made on the floor and a great fire blazing that the camping out might be as comfortable as possible. The nursery was devoted to the girls, and the little ones were sprinkled round wherever a snug corner was found.

How the riotous flock were ever packed away into

their beds no one knows. The lads caroused until long past midnight, and no knocking on the walls of paternal boots, or whispered entreaties of maternal voices through keyholes, had any effect, for it was impossible to resist the present advantages for a grand Christmas rampage.

The girls giggled and gossiped, told secrets, and laid plans more quietly, while the small things tumbled into bed and went to sleep at once, quite used up with the festivities of this remarkable day.

Grandma, down in her own cozy room, sat listening to the blithe noises with a smile on her face, for the past seemed to have come back again and her own boys and girls to be frolicking above there, as they used to do forty years ago.

"It's all so beautiful I can't go to bed, Dolly, and lose any of it. They'll go away to-morrow, and I may never see them any more," she said, as Dolly tied on her nightcap and brought her slippers.

"Yes, you will, mum. That dear child has made it so pleasant they can't keep away. You'll see plenty of 'em, if they carry out half the plans they have made. Mrs. George wants to come up and pass the summer here; Mr. Tom says he shall send his boys to school here; and every girl among them has promised Kate to make her a long visit. The thing

is done, mum, and you'll never be lonely any more."

"Thank God for that!" and grandma bent her head as if she had received a great blessing. "Dolly, I want to go and look at those children. It seems so like a dream to have them here, I must be sure of it," said grandma, folding her wrapper about her, and getting up with great decision.

"Massy on us, mum, you haven't been up them stairs for months. The dears are all right, warm as toast and sleepin' like dormice, I'll warrant," answered Dolly, taken aback at this new whim of old Madam's.

But grandma would go, so Dolly gave her an arm, and together the two old friends hobbled up the wide stairs and peeped in at the precious children. The lads looked like a camp of weary warriors reposing after a victory, and grandma went laughing away when she had taken a proud survey of this promising portion of the rising generation. The nursery was like a little convent full of rosy nuns sleeping peacefully, while a pictured Saint Agnes, with her lamb, smiled on them from the wall and the firelight flickered over the white figures and sweet faces, as if the sight were too fair to be lost in darkness. The little ones lay about promiscuously, looking like dissipated Cupids with sugar

hearts and faded roses still clutched in their chubby hands.

"My darlings!" whispered grandma, lingering fondly over them to cover a pair of rosy feet, put back a pile of tumbled curls, or kiss a little mouth still smiling in its sleep.

But when she came to the coldest corner of the room, where Kate lay on the hardest mattress, under the thinnest quilt, the old lady's eyes were full of tender tears; and forgetting the stiff joints that bent so painfully, she knelt slowly down and, putting her arms about the girl, blessed her in silence for the happiness she had given one old heart.

Kate woke at once and started up, exclaiming with a smile:

"Why, grandma, I was dreaming about an angel, and you look like one with your white gown and silvery hair!"

"No, dear, you are the angel in this house. How can I ever give you up?" answered Madam, holding fast the treasure that came to her so late.

"You never need to, grandma, for I have made my choice."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN OMNIBUS

I WAS born in Springfield — excuse me if I don't mention how many years ago, for my memory is a little treacherous on some points, and it does not matter in the least. I was a gay young bus, with a long red body, yellow wheels, and a picture of Washington on each side. Beautiful portraits, I assure you, with powdered hair, massive nose, and a cataract of shirt frill inundating his buff vest. His coat and eyes were wonderfully blue, and he stared at the world in general with superb dignity, no matter how much mud might temporarily obscure his noble countenance.

Yes, I was an omnibus to be proud of, for my yellow wheels rumbled sonorously as they rolled; my cushions were soft; my springs elastic; and my varnish shone with a brilliancy which caused the human eye to wink as it regarded me.

Joe Quimby first mounted my lofty perch; four fine gray horses drew me from obscurity; and Bill Buffum hung gayly on behind as conductor, for in

my early days there were no straps to jerk, and passengers did not plunge in and out in the undignified way they do now.

How well I remember my first trip, one bright spring day! I was to run between Roxbury and Boston, and we set out in great style and an admiring crowd to see us off. That was the beginning of a long and varied career — a useful one too, I hope, for never did an omnibus desire to do its duty more sincerely than I did. My heart yearned over every one whom I saw plodding along in the dust; my door opened hospitably to rich and poor, and no hand beckoned to me in vain. Can every one say as much?

For years I trundled to and fro punctually at my appointed hours, and many curious things I saw — many interesting people I carried. Of course, I had my favorites, and though I did my duty faithfully to all, there were certain persons whom I loved to carry, whom I watched for and received into my capacious bosom with delight.

Several portly old gentlemen rode down to their business every day for years, and I felt myself honored by such eminently respectable passengers. Nice, motherly women, with little baskets, daily went to market; for in earlier days housewives attended to these matters and were notable managers.

Gay young fellows would come swarming up beside Joe and crack jokes all the way into town, amusing me immensely.

But my especial pets were the young girls — for we had girls then — blithe, bonny creatures, with health on their cheeks, modesty in their bright eyes, and the indescribable charm of real maidenliness about them. So simply dressed, so quiet in manner, so unconscious of display, and so full of innocent gayety, that the crustiest passenger could not help softening as they came in. Bless their dear hearts! What would they say if they could see the little fashion plates schoolgirls are now? The seven-story hats with jet daggers, steel arrows, and gilt horseshoes on the sides, peacocks' tails in front, and quantities of impossible flowers tumbling off behind! The jewelry, the frills and bows, the frizzled hair and high-heeled boots, and, worst of all, the pale faces, tired eyes, and ungirlish manners!

Well, well, I must not scold the poor dears, for they are only what the times make them — fast and loud, frivolous and feeble. All are not spoiled, thank heaven, for now and then a fresh, modest face goes by, and then one sees how lovely girlhood may be.

I saw many little romances and some small tragedies, in my early days, and learned to take such

interest in human beings that I have never been able to become a mere machine.

When one of my worthy old gentlemen dropped away and I saw him no more, I mourned for him like a friend. When one of my housewifely women came in with a black bonnet on and no little lad or lass clinging to her hand, I creaked my sympathy for her loss and tried not to jolt the poor mother whose heart was so heavy. When one of my pretty girls entered, blushing and smiling, with a lover close behind, I was as pleased and proud as if she had been my own, and every black button that studded my red cushion twinkled with satisfaction.

I had many warm friends among the boys who were allowed to "hang on behind", for I never gave a dangerous lurch when they were there and never pinched their fingers in the door. No, I gave a jolly rumble when the steps were full; and I kept the father of his country beaming so benignly at them that they learned to love his old face, to watch for it, and to cheer it as we went by.

I was a patriotic bus, so you may imagine my feelings when, after years of faithful service on that route, I was taken off and sent to the paint shop, where a simpering damsel, with lilies in her hair,

replaced G. Washington's honored countenance. I was re-christened "The Naiad Queen," which disgusted me extremely, and kept to carry picnic parties to a certain lake.

Earlier in my life I should have enjoyed the fun; but I was now a middle-aged bus, and felt as if I wanted more serious work to do. However, I resigned myself and soon found that the change did me good; for in the city I was in danger of getting grimy with mud, battered with banging over stones, and used up with the late hours, noise, and excitement of town life.

Now I found great refreshment in carrying loads of gay young people into the country for a day of sunshine, green grass, and healthful pleasure. What jolly parties they were, to be sure! Such laughing and singing, feasting and frolicking, such baskets of flowers and fresh boughs as they carried home, and, better still, such blooming cheeks, happy eyes, and hearts bubbling over with the innocent gayety of youth! They soon seemed as fond of me as I was of them, for they welcomed me with shouts when I came, played games and had banquets inside of me when sun or rain made shelter pleasant, trimmed me up with wreaths as we went home in triumph, and gave three rousing cheers for the old bus when we parted. That was a happy time, and

it furnished many a pleasant memory for duller days.

After several seasons of picnicking, I was taken to an asylum for the deaf, dumb, and blind, and daily took a dozen or so out for an airing. You can easily imagine this was a great contrast to my last place, for now, instead of rollicking parties of boys and girls, I took a sad load of affliction; and it grieved me much to know that while some of the poor little creatures could see nothing of the beauty round them, the others could hear none of the sweet summer sounds and had no power to express their happiness in blithe laughter or the gay chatter one so loves to hear.

But it did me good, for seeing them so patient with their great troubles, I was ashamed to grumble about my small ones. I was now getting to be an elderly bus, with twinges of rheumatism in my axle-trees, many cracks like wrinkles on my once smooth paint, and an asthmatic creak to the hinges of the door that used to swing so smartly to and fro. Yes, I was evidently getting old, for I began to think over my past, to recall the many passengers I had carried, the crusty or jolly coachmen I had known, the various horses who had tugged me over stony streets or dusty roads, and the narrow escapes I had had in the course of my career.

Presently I found plenty of time for such reminiscences, for I was put away in an old stable and left there undisturbed a long, long time. At first, I enjoyed the rest and quiet; but I was of a social turn and soon longed for the stirring life I had left. I had no friends but a few gray hens, who roosted on my pole, laid eggs in the musty straw on my floor, and came hopping gravely down my steps with important "cut, cut, kadacut!" when their duty was done. I respected these worthy fowls and had many a gossip with them; but their views were very limited, and I soon tired of their domestic chat.

Chanticleer was coachman now, as in the days of Partlet and the nuts; but he never drove out, only flew up to my roof when he crowed and sat there, in his black and yellow suit, like a diligence driver sounding his horn. Interesting broods of chickens were hatched inside and took their first look at life from my dingy windows. I felt a grandfatherly fondness for the downy things and liked to have them chirping and scratching about me, taking small flights from my steps and giving funny little crows in imitation of their splendid papa.

Sundry cats called often, for rats and mice haunted the stable, and these gray-coated huntsmen had many an exciting chase among my moth-eaten

cushions, over the lofts, and round the grain bags.

"Here I shall end my days," I thought, and resigned myself to obscurity. But I was mistaken; for just as I was falling out of one long doze into another, a terrible commotion among the cats, hens, and mice woke me up, and I found myself trundling off to the paint shop again.

I emerged from that fragrant place in a new scarlet coat, trimmed with black and ornamented with a startling picture of a salmon-colored Mazeppa, airily dressed in chains and a blue sheet, hanging by one foot to the back of a coal-black steed with red nostrils and a tempestuous tail, who was wildly careering over a range of pea-green mountains on four impossible legs. It was much admired; but I preferred George Washington, like the loyal bus that I am.

I found I was to live in the suburbs and carry people to and from the station of a new railway. It and the town seemed to have sprung up like mushrooms. Well, I bumped passengers about the half-finished streets; but I did not like it, for everything had changed much during my retirement. Everybody seemed in a tearing hurry now — the men to be rich, the women to be fine; the boys and girls couldn't wait to grow up, but flirted before

they were in their teens; and the very babies scrambled out of their cradles as if each was bent on toddling farther and faster than its neighbor. My old head quite spun round at the whirl everything was in, and my old wheels knew no rest, for the new coachman drove like Jehu.

It is my private opinion that I should soon have fallen to pieces if a grand smash had not settled the matter for me. A gay young fellow undertook to drive, one dark night, and upset his load in a ditch, fortunately breaking no bones but mine. So I was sent to a carriage factory for repairs; but apparently my injuries were past cure, for I was left on a bit of waste land behind the factory, to go to ruin at leisure.

"This is the end of all things," I said, with a sigh, as year after year went by and I stood there alone, covered with wintry snow or blistered by summer sunshine. But how mistaken I was! For just when all seemed most sad and solitary, the happiest experience of my life came to me, and all the world was brightened for me by the coming of my dearest friends.

One chilly spring night, when rain was falling and the wind sighed dismally over the flats, I was waked from a nap by voices and the rustling of straw inside my still strong body.

"Some tramp," I thought, with a yawn, for I had often taken lodgers for a night, rent free. But the sounds I now heard were the voices of children, and I listened with interest to the little creatures chirping and nestling in there like the chickens I told you of.

"It's as nice as a house, Hans, and so warm I'll soon be dry," said one of the homeless birds who had taken shelter in my bosom.

"It's nicer than a house, Gretchen, because we can push it about if we like. I wish we could stay here always; I'm so tired of the streets," sighed another young voice.

"And I'm so hungry; I do wish mother would come," cried a very tired baby voice, with a sob.

"Hush, go to sleep, my Lina! I'll wake you if mother brings us bread, and if not, you will feel no disappointment, dear."

Then the elder sister seemed to wrap the little one close, and out of my bosom came a soft lullaby, as one child gave the other all she had — love and care.

"In the shed yonder I saw a piece of carpet; I shall go and bring it to cover us; then you will not shiver so, dear Gretchen," said the boy; and out into the rainy darkness he went, whistling to keep his spirits up and hide his hunger.

Soon he came hurrying back with the rude coverlet, and another voice was heard, saying, in the tone that only mothers use:

"Here is supper, dear children. Eat all; I have no wish for any more. People were very good to me, and there is enough for every one."

Then, with cries of joy, the hungry birds were fed, the motherly wings folded over them, and all seemed to sleep in the poor nest they had found.

All night the rain pattered on my old roof, but not a drop went through; all night the chilly wind crept round my windows and breathed in at every broken pane, but the old carpet kept the sleepers warm, and weariness was a sure lullaby. How pleased and proud I felt that I could still be useful, and how eagerly I waited for day to see yet more of my new tenants! I knew they would go soon and leave me to my loneliness, so I longed to see and hear all I could.

The first words the mother said, as she sat upon the step in the warm April sun, pleased me immensely, for they were of me.

"Yes, Hans, it will be well to stay here a day at least, if we may, for Lina is worn out and poor Gretchen so tired she can go no more. You shall guard them while they sleep, and I will go again

for food, and may get work. It is better out here in the sun than in some poor place in the city, and I like it well, this friendly old carriage that sheltered us when most we needed it."

So the poor woman trudged away, like a true mother bird, to find food for the ever hungry brood, and Hans, a stout lad of twelve, set about doing his part manfully.

When he heard the workmen stirring in the great factory, he took courage, and going in, told his sad tale of the little tired sisters sleeping in the old omnibus, the mother seeking work, the father lately dead, and he (the young lad) left to guard and help the family. He asked for nothing but leave to use the bit of carpet, and for any little job whereby he might earn a penny.

The good fellows had fatherly hearts under their rough jackets and lent a helping hand with the readiness the poor so often show in lightening one another's burdens. Each did what he could; and when the mother came back, she found the children fed and warmed, cheered by kind words and the promise of help.

Ah! It was a happy day for me when the Schmidts came wandering by and found my door ajar! A yet happier one for them, since the workmen and their

master befriended the poor souls so well that in a week the houseless family had a home and work whereby to earn their bread.

They had taken a fancy to me, and I was their home, for they were a hardy set and loved the sun and air. Clever Hans and his mother made me as neat and cozy as possible, stowing away their few possessions as if on shipboard. The shed was given to mother Schmidt for a wash house and a gypsy fire built on the ground, with an old kettle slung over it in which to boil the clothes she washed for such of the men as had no wives. Hans and Gretchen soon found work selling chips and shavings from the factory and bringing home the broken food they begged by the way. Baby Lina was a universal pet, and many a sixpence found its way into her little hand from the pockets of the kindly men, who took it out in kisses or the pretty songs she sang them.

All that summer my family prospered, and I was a happy old bus. A proud one, too, for the dear people loved me well, and in return for the shelter I gave them, they beautified me by all the humble means in their power. Some one gave Gretchen a few scarlet beans, and these she planted among the dandelions and green grass that had grown about my wheels. The gay runners climbed fast, and

All that summer my family prospered, and I was a happy old bus.

when they reached the roof, Hans made a trellis of old barrel hoops, over which they spread their broad leaves and bright flowers till Lina had a green little bower up aloft, where she sat, as happy as a queen, with the poor toys which her baby fancy changed to playthings of the loveliest sort.

Mother Schmidt washed and ironed busily all day in her shed, cooked the soup over her gypsy fire, and when the daily work was done, sat in the shadow of the old omnibus with her children round her, a grateful and contented woman. If any one asked her what she would do when our bitter winter came, the smile on her placid face grew graver, but did not vanish, as she laid her worn hands together and answered, with simple faith:

"The good Gott who gave us this home and raised up these friends will not forget us, for He has such as we in His especial charge."

She was right, for the master of the great factory was a kind man, and something in the honest hard-working family interested him so much that he could not let them suffer, but took such friendly thought for them that he wrought one of the pleas- and miracles which keep a rich man's memory green in grateful hearts, though the world may never know of it.

When autumn came and the pretty bower began to fade, the old omnibus to be cold at night, and the shed too gusty even for the hardy German laundress, a great surprise was planned and gayly carried out. On the master's birthday the men had a holiday and bade the Schmidts be ready to take part in the festival, for all the factory people were to have a dinner in one of the long rooms.

A jovial time they had; and when the last bone had been polished off, the last health drunk, and three rousing cheers for the master given with a will, the great joke took place. First the Schmidts were told to go and see what had been left for them in the bus, and off they ran, little dreaming what was to come. *I* knew all about it and was in a great twitter, for I bore a grand part in it.

The dear unsuspecting family piled in, and were so busy having raptures over certain bundles of warm clothes found there that they did not mind what went on without. A dozen of the stoutest men quietly harnessed themselves to the rope fastened to my pole, and at a signal trotted away with me at a great pace, while the rest, with their wives and children, came laughing and shouting after.

Imagine the amazement of the good Schmidts at this sudden start, their emotions during that tri-

umphal progress, and their unspeakable surprise and joy when their carriage stopped at the door of a tidy little house in a lane not far away, and they were handed out to find the master waiting to welcome them home.

Dear heart, how beautiful it all was! I cannot describe it, but I would not have missed it for the world, because it was one of the scenes that do everybody so much good and leave such a pleasant memory behind.

That was my last trip, for the joyful agitation of that day was too much for me, and no sooner was I safely landed in the field behind the little house than one of my old wheels fell all to pieces, and I should have tumbled over, like a decrepit old creature, if the men had not propped me up. But I did not care; my travelling days were past, and I was quite content to stand there under the apple trees, watching my family safe and busy in their new home.

I was not forgotten, I assure you, for Germans have much sentiment, and they still loved the old omnibus that sheltered them when most forlorn. Even when Hans was a worker in the factory, he found time to mend me up and keep me tidy; pretty Gretchen, in spite of much help given to the

hard-working mother, never forgot to plant some common flower to beautify and cheer her old friend; and little Lina, bless her heart, made me her baby house. She played there day after day, a tiny matron, with her dolls, her kitten, and her bits of furniture, as happy a child as ever sang "Bye-low" to a dirty-faced rag darling. She is my greatest comfort and delight; and the proudest moment of my life was when Hans painted her little name on my door and gave me to her for her own.

Here my story ends, for nothing now remains to me but to crumble slowly to ruin and go where the good busses go — very slowly, I am sure, for my little mistress takes great care of me, and I shall never suffer from rough usage any more. I am quite happy and contented as I stand here under the trees that scatter their white petals on my rusty roof each spring; and well I may be, for after my busy life I am at rest; the sun shines kindly on me; the grass grows greenly round me; good friends cherish me in my old age; and a little child nestles in my heart, keeping it tender to the last.

ROSES AND FORGET-ME-NOTS

I

ROSES

It was a cold November storm, and everything looked forlorn. Even the pert sparrows were draggle-tailed and too much out of spirits to fight for crumbs with the fat pigeons who tripped through the mud with their little red boots as if in haste to get back to their cozy home in the dovecot.

But the most forlorn creature out that day was a small errand girl, with a bonnet box on each arm and both hands struggling to hold a big broken umbrella. A pair of worn-out boots let in the wet upon her tired feet; a thin cotton dress and an old shawl poorly protected her from the storm; and a faded hood covered her head.

The face that looked out from this hood was too pale and anxious for one so young; and when a sudden gust turned the old umbrella inside out with a crash, despair fell upon poor Lizzie, and she was so miserable she could have sat down in the rain and cried.

But there was no time for tears; so, dragging the dilapidated umbrella along, she spread her shawl over the bonnet boxes and hurried down the broad street, eager to hide her misfortunes from a pretty young girl who stood at a window laughing at her.

She could not find the number of the house where one of the fine hats was to be left; and after hunting all down one side of the street, she crossed over and came at last to the very house where the pretty girl lived. She was no longer to be seen, and with a sigh of relief, Lizzie rang the bell and was told to wait in the hall while Miss Belle tried the hat on.

Glad to rest, she warmed her feet, righted her umbrella, and then sat looking about her with eyes quick to see the beauty and the comfort that made the place so homelike and delightful. A small waiting room opened from the hall, and in it stood many blooming plants, whose fragrance attracted Lizzie as irresistibly as if she had been a butterfly or bee.

Slipping in, she stood enjoying the lovely colors, sweet odors, and delicate shapes of these household spirits; for Lizzie loved flowers passionately, and just then they possessed a peculiar charm for her.

One particularly captivating little rose won her heart and made her long for it with a longing that became a temptation too strong to resist. It was so

perfect, so like a rosy face smiling out from the green leaves, that Lizzie could *not* keep her hands off it,

and having smelt it, touched, and kissed it, she suddenly broke the stem and hid it in her pocket. Then, frightened at what she had done, she crept back to

her place in the hall and sat there, burdened with remorse.

A servant came just then to lead her upstairs, for Miss Belle wished the hat altered and must give directions. With her heart in a flutter and pinker roses in her cheeks than the one in her pocket, Lizzie followed her to a handsome room, where a pretty girl stood before a long mirror with the hat in her hand.

"Tell Madame Tifany that I don't like it at all, for she hasn't put in the blue plume mamma ordered; and I won't have rosebuds — they are so common," said the young lady in a dissatisfied tone, as she twirled the hat about.

"Yes, Miss," was all Lizzie could say, for *she* considered that hat the loveliest thing a girl could possibly own.

"You had better ask your mamma about it, Miss Belle, before you give any orders. She will be up in a few moments, and the girl can wait," put in a maid, who was sewing in the anteroom.

"I suppose I must; but I *won't* have roses," answered Belle crossly. Then she glanced at Lizzie and said more gently, "You look very cold; come and sit by the fire while you wait."

"I'm afraid I'll wet the pretty rug, Miss; my feet

are sopping," said Lizzie, gratefully but timidly.

"So they are! Why didn't you wear rubber boots?"

"I haven't . . . any."

"I'll give you mine, then, for I hate them; and as I never go out in wet weather, they are of no earthly use to me. Marie, bring them here; I shall be glad to get rid of them, and I'm sure they'll be useful to you."

"Oh, thank you, Miss! I'd like 'em ever so much, for I'm out in the rain half the time and get bad colds because my boots are old," said Lizzie, smiling brightly at the thought of the welcome gift.

"I should think your mother would get you warmer things," began Belle, who found something rather interesting in the shabby girl with shy bright eyes and curly hair bursting out of the old hood.

"I haven't . . . any mother," said Lizzie with a pathetic glance at her poor clothes.

"I'm so sorry! Have you brothers and sisters?" asked Belle, hoping to find something pleasant to talk about, for she was a kind little soul.

"No, Miss; I've no folks at all."

"Oh, dear; how sad! Why, who takes care of you?" cried Belle, looking quite distressed.

"No one; I take care of myself. I work for Mad-

ame, and she pays me a dollar a week. I stay with Mrs. Brown and chore round to pay for my keep. My dollar doesn't get many clothes, so I can't be as neat as I'd like." And a forlorn look came back to poor Lizzie's face.

Belle said nothing, but sat among the sofa cushions, where she had thrown herself, looking soberly at this other girl, no older than she was, who took care of herself and was all alone in the world. It was a new idea to Belle, who was loved and petted as an only child is apt to be. She often saw beggars and pitied them, but knew very little about their wants and lives; so it was like turning a new page in her happy life to be brought so near to poverty as this chance meeting with the milliner's girl.

"Aren't you afraid and lonely and unhappy?" she said, slowly, trying to understand and put herself in Lizzie's place.

"Yes; but it's no use. I can't help it, and maybe things will get better by and by, and I'll have my wish," answered Lizzie more hopefully, because Belle's pity warmed her heart and made her troubles seem lighter.

"What is your wish?" asked Belle, hoping mamma wouldn't come just yet, for she was getting interested in the stranger.

"To have a nice little room and make flowers, like the French girl I know. It's such pretty work, and she gets lots of money, for everyone likes her flowers. She shows me how, sometimes, and I can do leaves first-rate; but — "

There Lizzie stopped suddenly, and the color rushed up to her forehead, for she remembered the little rose in her pocket, and it weighed upon her conscience like a stone.

Before Belle could ask what was the matter, Marie came in with a tray of cake and fruit, saying:

"Here's your lunch, Miss Belle."

"Put it down, please; I'm not ready for it yet." And Belle shook her head as she glanced at Lizzie, who was staring hard at the fire with such a troubled face that Belle could not bear to see it.

Jumping out of her nest of cushions, she heaped a plate with good things, and going to Lizzie, offered it, saying, with a gentle courtesy that made the act doubly sweet:

"Please have some; you must be tired of waiting."

But Lizzie could not take it; she could only cover her face and cry, for this kindness rent her heart and made the stolen flower a burden too heavy to be borne.

"Oh, don't cry so! Are you sick? Have I been rude? Tell me all about it; and if I can't do anything, mamma can," said Belle, surprised and troubled.

"No, I'm not sick; I'm bad, and I can't bear it when you are so good to me," sobbed Lizzie, quite overcome with penitence; and taking out the crumpled rose, she confessed her fault with many tears.

"Don't feel so much about such a little thing as that," began Belle, warmly; then she checked herself and added, more soberly, "It *was* wrong to take it without leave; but it's all right now, and I'll give you as many roses as you want, for I know you are a good girl."

"Thank you. I didn't want it only because it was pretty, but I wanted to copy it. I can't get any for myself, and so I can't do my make-believe ones well. Madame won't even lend me the old ones in the store, and Estelle has none to spare for me, because I can't pay her for teaching me. She gives me bits of muslin and wire and things and shows me now and then. But I know if I had a real flower I could copy it, so she'd see I did know something, for I try real hard. I'm so tired of slopping round the streets; I'd do anything to earn my living some other way."

Lizzie had poured out her trouble rapidly, and the little story was quite affecting when one saw the tears on her cheeks, the poor clothes, and the thin hands that held the stolen rose. Belle was much touched and, in her impetuous way, set about mending matters as fast as possible.

"Put on those boots and that pair of dry stockings right away. Then tuck as much cake and fruit into your pocket as it will hold. I'm going to get you some flowers and see if mamma is too busy to attend to me."

With a nod and a smile, Belle flew about the room a minute; then vanished, leaving Lizzie to her comfortable task, feeling as if fairies still haunted the world as in the good old times.

When Belle came back with a handful of roses, she found Lizzie absorbed in admiring contemplation of her new boots, as she ate sponge cake in a blissful sort of waking dream.

"Mamma can't come, but I don't care about the hat. It will do very well and isn't worth fussing about. There, will those be of any use to you?" And she offered the nosegay with a much happier face than the one Lizzie first saw.

"Oh, Miss, they're just lovely! I'll copy that pink rose as soon as ever I can, and when I've learned

how to do 'em tiptop, I'd like to bring you some, if you don't mind," answered Lizzie, smiling all over her face as she buried her nose luxuriously in the fragrant mass.

"I'd like it very much, for I should think you'd have to be very clever to make such pretty things. I really quite fancy those rosebuds in my hat, now I know that you're going to learn how to make them. Put an orange in your pocket and the flowers in water as soon as you can, so they'll be fresh when you want them. Good-by! Bring home our hats every time and tell me how you get on."

With kind words like these, Belle dismissed Lizzie, who ran downstairs, feeling as rich as if she had found a fortune. Away to the next place she hurried, anxious to get her errands done and the precious posies safely into fresh water. But Mrs. Turretville was not at home, and the bonnet could not be left till paid for. So Lizzie turned to go down the high steps, glad that she need not wait. She stopped one instant to take a delicious sniff at her flowers, and that was the last happy moment that poor Lizzie knew for many weary months.

The new boots were large for her, the steps slippery with sleet, and down went the little errand girl, from top to bottom, until she landed in the

gutter directly upon Mrs. Turretville's costly bonnet.

"I've saved my posies, anyway," sighed Lizzie, as she picked herself up, bruised, wet, and faint with pain. "But, oh, my heart! Won't Madame scold when she sees that bandbox smashed flat!" groaned the poor child, sitting on the curbstone to get her breath and view the disaster.

The rain poured; the wind blew; the sparrows on the park railing chirped derisively; and no one came along to help Lizzie out of her troubles. Slowly she gathered up her burdens; painfully she limped away in the big boots; and the last the naughty sparrows saw of her was a shabby little figure going around the corner, with a pale, tearful face held lovingly over the bright bouquet that was her one treasure and her only comfort in the moment which brought to her the great misfortune of her life.

II

FORGET-ME-NOTS

"Oh, mamma, I am so relieved that the box has come at last! If it had not, I do believe I should have died of disappointment," cried pretty Belle,

five years later, on the morning of her eighteenth birthday.

"It would have been a serious disappointment, darling, for I had set my heart on your wearing my gift to-morrow night; and when the steamers kept coming in without my trunk from Paris, I was very anxious. I hope you will like it."

"Dear mamma, I know I shall like it; your taste is so good and you know what suits me so well. Make haste, Marie; I'm dying to see it," said Belle, dancing about the great trunk, as the maid carefully unfolded tissue papers and muslin wrappers.

A young girl's first ball dress is a grand affair — in her eyes, at least; and Belle soon stopped dancing, to stand with clasped hands, eager eyes, and parted lips before the snowy pile of illusion which was at last daintily lifted out upon the bed. Then, as Marie displayed its loveliness, little cries of delight were heard, and when the whole delicate dress was arranged to the best effect, she threw herself upon her mother's neck and cried with pleasure.

"Mamma, it is too lovely! And you are very kind to do so much for me. How shall I ever thank you?"

"By putting it right on to see if it fits; and when you wear it, look your happiest, that I may be proud of my pretty daughter."

Mamma got no further, for Marie uttered a French shriek, wrung her hands, and then began to burrow wildly in the trunk and among the papers, crying distractedly:

"Great heavens, Madame! The wreath has been forgotten! What an affliction! Mademoiselle's enchanting toilette is destroyed without the wreath, and nowhere do I find it."

In vain they searched; in vain Marie wailed and Belle declared it must be somewhere; no wreath appeared. It was duly set down in the bill, and a fine sum charged for a headdress to match the dainty forget-me-nots that looped the fleecy skirts and ornamented the front of the dress. It had evidently been forgotten; and mamma dispatched Marie at once to try to match the flowers, for Belle would not hear of any other decoration for her beautiful blonde hair.

The dress fitted to a charm and was pronounced by all beholders the loveliest thing ever seen. Nothing was wanted but the wreath to make it quite perfect, and when Marie returned, after a long search, with no forget-me-nots, Belle was in despair.

"Wear natural ones," suggested a sympathizing friend.

But another hunt among greenhouses was as fruitless as that among milliners' rooms. No forget-me-nots could be found, and Marie fell exhausted into a chair, desolated at what she felt to be an awful calamity.

"Let me have the carriage, and I'll ransack the city until I find some," cried Belle, growing more resolute with each failure.

Mamma was deep in preparations for the ball and could not help her afflicted daughter, though she was much disappointed at the mishap. So Belle drove off, resolved to have her flowers whether there were any or not.

Anyone who has ever tried to match a ribbon, find a certain fabric, or get anything done in a hurry, knows what a wearisome task it sometimes is and can imagine Belle's state of mind after repeated disappointments. She was about to give up in despair, when someone suggested that perhaps the Frenchwoman, Estelle Valnor, might make the desired wreath, if there was time.

Away drove Belle and, on entering the room, gave a sigh of satisfaction, for a whole boxful of the loveliest forget-me-nots stood upon the table. As fast as possible she told her tale and demanded the flowers, no matter what the price might be. Imag-

ine her feelings when the Frenchwoman, with a shrug, announced that it was impossible to give mademoiselle a single spray. All were engaged to trim a bridesmaid's dress and must be sent away at once.

It really was too bad! And Belle lost her temper entirely, for no persuasion or bribes would win a spray from Estelle. The provoking part of it was that the wedding would not come off for several days, and there was time enough to make more flowers for that dress, since Belle only wanted a few for her hair. Neither would Estelle make her any, as her hands were full, and so small an order was not worth deranging one's self for; but observing Belle's sorrowful face, she said, affably:

"Mademoiselle may, perhaps, find the flowers she desires at Miss Berton's. She has been helping me with these garlands and may have some left. Here is her address."

Belle took the card with thanks and hurried away with a last hope faintly stirring in her girlish heart, for Belle had an unusually ardent wish to look her best at this party, since Somebody was to be there, and Somebody considered forget-me-nots the sweetest flowers in the world. Mamma knew this, and the kiss Belle gave her when the dress came had a more

tender meaning than gratified vanity or daughterly love.

Up many stairs she climbed and came at last to a little room, very poor but very neat, where, at the one window, sat a young girl, with crutches by her side and her lap full of flower leaves and petals. She rose slowly as Belle came in and then stood looking at her, with such a wistful expression in her shy, bright eyes, that Belle's anxious face cleared involuntarily and her voice lost its impatient tone.

As she spoke, she glanced about the room, hoping to see some blue blossoms awaiting her. But none appeared; and she was about to despond again, when the girl said, gently:

"I have none by me now, but I may be able to find you some."

"Thank you very much, but I have been everywhere in vain. Still, if you do get any, please send them to me as soon as possible. Here is my card."

Miss Berton glanced at it, then cast a quick look at the sweet, anxious face before her, and smiled so brightly that Belle smiled also, and asked, wonderingly:

"What is it? What do you see?"

"I see the dear young lady who was so kind to me long ago. You don't remember me and never knew

my name; but I never have forgotten you all these years. I always hoped I could do something to show how grateful I was, and now I can, for you shall have your flowers, if I sit up all night to make them."

But Belle still shook her head and watched the smiling face before her with wondering eyes, until the girl added, with sudden color in her cheeks:

"Ah, you've done so many kind things in your life, you don't remember the little errand girl from Madame Tifany's who stole a rose in your hall, and how you gave her rubber boots and cake and flowers and were so good to her she couldn't forget it if she lived to be a hundred."

"But you are so changed," began Belle, who did faintly recollect that little incident in her happy life.

"Yes, I had a fall and hurt myself so that I shall always be lame."

And Lizzie went on to tell how Madame had dismissed her in a rage; how she lay ill until Mrs. Brown sent her to the hospital; and how for a year she had suffered much alone, in that great house of pain, before one of the kind visitors had befriended her.

While hearing the story of the five years, that had been so full of pleasure, ease and love for herself,

Belle forgot her errand and, sitting beside Lizzie, listened with pitying eyes to all she told of her endeavors to support herself by the delicate handiwork she loved.

"I'm very happy now," ended Lizzie, looking about the little bare room with a face full of the sweetest content. "I get nearly work enough to pay my way, and Estelle sends me some when she has more than she can do. I've learned to do it nicely, and it is so pleasant to sit here and make flowers instead of trudging about in the wet with other people's hats. Though I do sometimes wish I was able to trudge; one gets on so slowly with crutches."

A little sigh followed the words, and Belle put her own plump hand on the delicate one that held the crutch, saying, in her cordial voice:

"I'll come and take you to drive sometimes, for you are too pale and you'll get ill sitting here at work day after day. Please let me; I'd love to, for I feel so idle and wicked when I see busy people like you that I reproach myself for neglecting my duty and having more than my share of happiness."

Lizzie thanked her with a look, and then said, in a tone of interest that was delightful to hear:

"Tell about the wreath you want; I should so love to do it for you, if I can."

Belle had forgotten all about it in listening to this sad little story of a girl's life. Now she felt half ashamed to talk of so frivolous a matter until she remembered that it would help Lizzie; and resolving to pay for it as never garland was paid for before, she entered upon the subject with renewed interest.

"You shall have the flowers in time for your ball to-morrow night. I will try to make a wreath that will please you, only it may take longer than I think. Don't be troubled if I don't send it until evening; it will surely come in time. I can work fast, and this will be the happiest job I ever did," said Lizzie, beginning to lay out mysterious little tools and bend delicate wires.

"You are altogether too grateful for the little I have done. It makes me feel ashamed to think I did not find you out before and do something more worth thanks."

"Ah, it wasn't the boots or the cake or the roses, dear Miss Belle. It was the kind looks, the gentle words, the way it was done, that went right to my heart and did me more good than a million in money. I never stole a pin after that day, for the little rose wouldn't let me forget how you forgave me so

sweetly. I sometimes think it kept me from greater temptations, for I was a poor, forlorn child, with no one to keep me good."

Pretty Belle looked prettier than ever as she listened, and a bright tear stood in either eye like a drop of dew on a blue flower. It touched her very much to learn that her little act of childish charity had been so sweet and helpful to this lonely girl and now lived so freshly in her grateful memory. It showed her, suddenly, how precious little deeds of love and sympathy are; how strong to bless; how easy to perform; how comfortable to recall. Her heart was very full and tender just then, and the lesson sank deep into it never to be forgotten.

She sat a long time watching flowers bud and blossom under Lizzie's skilful fingers and then hurried home to tell all her glad news to Mamma.

If the next day had not been full of most delightfully exciting events, Belle might have felt some anxiety about her wreath, for hour after hour went by and nothing arrived from Lizzie.

Evening came, and all was ready. Belle was dressed, and looked so lovely that Mamma declared she needed nothing more. But Marie insisted that the grand effect would be ruined without the gar-

land upon the sunshiny hair. Belle had time now to be anxious and waited with growing impatience for the finishing touch to her charming toilette.

"I must be downstairs to receive and can't wait another moment, so put in the blue pompon and let me go," she said at last, with a sigh of disappointment, for the desire to look beautiful that night in Somebody's eyes had increased fourfold.

With a tragic gesture, Marie was about to adjust the pompon when the quick tap of a crutch came down the hall, and Lizzie hurried in, flushed and breathless, but smiling happily as she uncovered the box she carried with a look of proud satisfaction.

A general "Ah!" of admiration arose as Belle, mamma, and Marie surveyed the lovely wreath that lay before them; and when it was carefully arranged on the bright head that was to wear it, Belle blushed with pleasure. Mamma said: "It is more beautiful than any Paris could have sent us;" and Marie clasped her hands theatrically, sighing, with her head on one side:

"Truly, yes; Mademoiselle is now adorable!"

"I am so glad you like it. I did my very best and worked all night, but I had to beg one spray from Estelle, or, with all my haste, I could not have finished in time," said Lizzie, refreshing her weary

eyes with a long, affectionate gaze at the pretty figure before her.

A fold of the airy skirt was caught on one of the

blue clusters, and Lizzie knelt down to arrange it as she spoke. Belle leaned toward her and said softly: "Money alone can't pay you for this kindness; so tell me how I can best serve you. This is the

happiest night of my life, and I want to make every one feel glad also."

"Then don't talk of paying me, but promise that I may make the flowers you wear on your wedding day," whispered Lizzie, kissing the kind hand held out to help her rise, for on it she saw a brilliant ring, and in the blooming, blushing face bent over her she read the tender little story that Somebody had told Belle that day.

"So you shall! And I'll keep this wreath all my life for your sake, dear," answered Belle, as her full heart bubbled over with pitying affection for the poor girl who would never make a bridal garland for herself.

Belle kept her word, even when she was in a happy home of her own, for out of the dead roses bloomed a friendship that brightened Lizzie's life; and long after the blue garland was faded, Belle remembered the helpful little lesson that taught her to read the faces poverty touches with a pathetic eloquence, which says to those who look, "Forget-me-not."

TESSA'S SURPRISES

LITTLE TESSA sat alone by the fire, waiting for her father to come home from work. The children were fast asleep, all four in the big bed behind the curtain; the wind blew hard outside, and the snow beat on the windowpanes; the room was large, and the fire so small and feeble that it didn't half warm the little bare toes peeping out of the old shoes on the hearth.

Tessa's father was an Italian plaster worker, very poor but kind and honest. The mother had died not long ago and left twelve-year-old Tessa to take care of the little children. She tried to be very wise and motherly and worked for them like any little woman; but it was so hard to keep the small bodies warm and fed and the small souls good and happy, that poor Tessa was often at her wits' end. She always waited for her father, no matter how tired she was, so that he might find his supper warm, and a bit of fire and a loving little face to welcome him. Tessa thought over her troubles at these quiet times

and made her plans, for her father left things to her a good deal and she had no friends but Tommo, the harp boy upstairs, and the lively cricket who lived in the chimney. To-night her face was very sober and her pretty brown eyes very thoughtful as she stared at the fire and knit her brows, as if perplexed. She was not thinking of her old shoes, or the empty closet, or the boys' ragged clothes just then. No; she had a fine plan in her good little head and was trying to discover how she could carry it out.

You see, Christmas was coming in a week, and she had set her heart on putting something in the children's stockings, as the mother used to do, for while she lived, things were comfortable. Now Tessa had not a penny in the world and didn't know how to get one, for all the father's earnings had to go for food, fire, and rent.

"If there were only fairies, ah, how heavenly that would be! For then I should tell them all I wish, and, pop, behold the fine things in my lap!" said Tessa to herself. "I must earn the money; there is no one to give it to me, and I cannot beg. But what can I do, so small and stupid and shy as I am? I *must* find some way to give the little ones a nice Christmas. I *must!* I *must!*" and Tessa pulled her long hair, as if that would help her think.

But it didn't, and her heart grew heavier and heavier, for it did seem hard that in a great city full of fine things, there should be none for poor Nono, Sep, and little Speranza. Just as Tessa's tears began to tumble off her eyelashes on to her brown cheeks, the cricket began to chirp. Of course, he didn't say a word; but it really did seem as if he had answered her question almost as well as a fairy, for before he had piped a dozen shrill notes, an idea popped into Tessa's head — such a truly splendid idea that she clapped her hands and burst out laughing, "I'll do it! I'll do it! if father will let me," she said to herself, smiling and nodding at the fire. "Tommo will like to have me go with him and sing while he plays his harp in the streets. I know many songs and may get money, if I am not frightened, for people throw pennies to other little girls who only play the tambourine. Yes, I will try; and then, if I do well, the little ones will have a Merry Christmas."

So full of her plan was Tessa, that she ran upstairs at once and asked Tommo if he would take her with him on the morrow. Her friend was delighted, for he thought Tessa's songs very sweet and was sure she would get money if she tried.

"But see, then, it is cold in the streets; the wind

bites, and the snow freezes one's fingers. The day is very long, people are cross, and at night one is ready to die with weariness. Thou art so small, Tessa, I am afraid it will go badly with thee," said Tommo, who was a merry, black-eyed boy of fourteen, with the kindest heart in the world under his old jacket.

"I do not mind cold and wet and cross people, if I can get the pennies," answered Tessa, feeling very brave with such a friend to help her. She thanked Tommo and ran away to get ready, for she felt sure her father would not refuse her anything. She sewed up the holes in her shoes as well as she could, for she had much of that sort of cobbling to do; she mended her only gown, and laid ready the old hood and shawl which had been her mother's. Then she washed out little Ranza's frock and put it to dry, because she would not be able to do it the next day. She set the table and got things ready for breakfast, for Tommo went out early and must not be kept waiting for her. She longed to make the beds and dress the children over night, she was in such a hurry to have all in order; but as that could not be, she sat down again and tried over all the songs she knew. Six pretty ones were chosen; and she sung away with all her heart in a fresh little voice so

sweetly that the children smiled in their sleep and her father's tired face brightened as he entered, for Tessa was his cheery cricket on the hearth. When she had told her plan, Peter Benari shook his head and thought it would never do; but Tessa begged so hard, he consented at last that she should try it for one week and sent her to bed the happiest little girl in New York.

Next morning the sun shone, but the cold wind blew, and the snow lay thick in the streets. As soon as her father was gone, Tessa flew about and put everything in nice order, telling the children she was going out for the day and they were to mind Tommo's mother, who would see about the fire and the dinner; for the good woman loved Tessa and entered into her little plans with all her heart. Nono and Guiseppe, or Sep, as they called him, wondered what she was going away for, and little Ranza cried at being left, but Tessa told them they would know all about it in a week and have a fine time if they were good. So they kissed her all round and let her go.

Poor Tessa's heart beat fast as she trudged away with Tommo, who slung his harp over his shoulder and gave her his hand. It was rather a dirty hand, but so kind that Tessa clung to it and kept looking

up at the friendly brown face for encouragement.

"We go first to the *café*, where many French and Italians eat the breakfast. They like my music and often give me sips of hot coffee, which I like much. You too shall have the sips, and perhaps the pennies, for these people are greatly kind," said Tommo, leading her into a large smoky place, where many people sat at little tables, eating and drinking. "See, now, have no fear; give them 'Bella Monica'; that is merry and will make the laugh," whispered Tommo, tuning his harp.

For a moment Tessa felt so frightened that she wanted to run away; but she remembered the empty stockings at home and the fine plan, and she resolved *not* to give it up. One fat old Frenchman nodded to her, and it seemed to help her very much, for she began to sing before she thought, and that was the hardest part of it. Her voice trembled, and her cheeks grew redder and redder as she went on, but she kept her eyes fixed on her old shoes and so got through without breaking down, which was very nice. The people laughed, for the song *was* merry, and the fat man smiled and nodded again. This gave her courage to try another, and she sung better and better each time, for Tommo played his best and kept whispering to her, "Yes; we go well; this

is fine. They will give the money and the blessed coffee."

So they did; for when the little concert was over, several men put pennies in the cap Tessa offered, and the fat man took her on his knee and ordered

a mug of coffee and some bread and butter for them both. This quite won her heart, and when they left the *café*, she kissed her hand to the old Frenchman and said to her friend, "How kind they are! I like this very much; and now it is not hard."

But Tommo shook his curly head and answered, soberly, "Yes, I took you there first, for they love music and are of our country; but up among the great houses we shall not always do well. The peo-

ple there are busy or hard or idle and care nothing for harps and songs. Do not skip and laugh too soon, for the day is long, and we have but twelve pennies yet."

Tessa walked more quietly and rubbed her cold hands, feeling that the world was a very big place and wondering how the children got on at home without the little mother. Till noon they did not earn much, for every one seemed in a hurry, and the noise of many sleigh bells drowned the music. Slowly they made their way up to the great squares where the big houses were, with fine ladies and pretty children at the windows. Here Tessa sung all her best songs, and Tommo played as fast as his fingers could fly; but it was too cold to have the windows open, so the pretty children could not listen long, and the ladies tossed out a little money and soon went back to their own affairs.

All the afternoon the two friends wandered about, singing and playing and gathering up their small harvest. At dusk they went home — Tessa so hoarse she could hardly speak and so tired she fell asleep over her supper. But she had made half a dollar, for Tommo divided the money fairly, and she felt rich with her share. The other days were very much like this; sometimes they made more, sometimes

less, but Tommo always "went halves"; and Tessa kept on, in spite of cold and weariness, for her plans grew as her earnings increased, and now she hoped to get useful things, instead of candy and toys alone.

On the day before Christmas she made herself as tidy as she could, for she hoped to earn a good deal. She tied a bright scarlet handkerchief over the old hood, and the brilliant color set off her brown cheeks and bright eyes, as well as the pretty black braids of her hair. Tommo's mother lent her a pair of boots so big that they turned up at the toes, but there were no holes in them, and Tessa felt quite elegant in whole boots. Her hands were covered with chilblains, for she had no mittens; but she put them under her shawl and scuffled merrily away in her big boots, feeling so glad that the week was over and nearly three dollars safe in her pocket. How gay the streets were that day! How brisk every one was, and how bright the faces looked, as people trotted about with big baskets, holly wreaths, and young evergreens going to blossom into splendid Christmas trees!

"If I could have a tree for the children, I'd never want anything again. But I can't, so I'll fill the socks all full, and be happy," said Tessa, as she

looked wistfully into the gay stores and saw the heavy baskets go by.

"Who knows what may happen if we do well?" returned Tommo, nodding wisely, for he had a plan as well as Tessa and kept chuckling over it as he trudged through the mud. They did *not* do well, somehow, for every one seemed so full of their own affairs they could not stop to listen, even to "Bella Monica", but bustled away to spend their money in turkeys, toys, and trees. In the afternoon it began to rain and poor Tessa's heart to fail her; for the big boots tired her feet; the cold wind made her hands ache; and the rain spoiled the fine red handkerchief. Even Tommo looked sober and didn't whistle as he walked, for he also was disappointed, and his plan looked rather doubtful, the pennies came in so slowly.

"We'll try one more street, and then go home, thou art so tired, little one. Come; let me wipe thy face, and give me thy hand here in my jacket pocket; there it will be as warm as any kitten;" and kind Tommo brushed away the drops which were not *all* rain from Tessa's cheeks, tucked the poor hand into his ragged pocket, and led her carefully along the slippery streets, for the boots nearly tripped her up.

II

At the first house, a cross old gentleman flapped his newspaper at them; at the second, a young gentleman and lady were so busy talking that they never turned their heads; and at the third, a servant came out and told them to go away, because some one was sick. At the fourth, some people let them sing all their songs and gave nothing. The next three houses were empty; and the last of all showed not a single face, as they looked up anxiously. It was so cold, so dark and discouraging, that Tessa couldn't help one sob; and as he glanced down at the little red nose and wet figure beside him, Tommo gave his harp an angry thump and said something very fierce in Italian. They were just going to turn away; but they didn't, for that angry thump happened to be the best thing they could have done. All of a sudden a little head appeared at the window, as if the sound had brought it; then another and another, till there were five, of all heights and colors, and five eager faces peeped out, smiling and nodding to the two below.

"Sing, Tessa; sing! Quick! quick!" cried Tommo, twanging away with all his might, and showing his

white teeth, as he smiled back at the little gentlefolk.

Bless us! How Tessa did tune up at that! She chirped away like a real bird, forgetting all about the tears on her cheeks, the ache in her hands, and the heaviness at her heart. The children laughed, and clapped their hands, and cried, "More! more! Sing another, little girl! Please, do!" And away they went again, piping and playing, till Tessa's breath was gone and Tommo's stout fingers tingled well.

"Mamma says, come to the door; it's too muddy to throw the money in the street!" cried out a kindly child's voice, as Tessa held up the old cap, with beseeching eyes.

Up the wide stone steps went the street musicians, and the whole flock came running down to give a handful of silver and ask all sorts of questions. Tessa felt so grateful that, without waiting for Tommo, she sang her sweetest little song all alone. It was about a lost lamb, and her heart was in the song; therefore, she sang it well, so well that a pretty young lady came down to listen, and stood watching the bright-eyed child, who looked about her as she sang, evidently enjoying the light and warmth of the fine hall and the sight of the lovely

"Sing, Tessa; sing!" cried Tommo.

children with their gay dresses, shining hair, and dainty little shoes.

"You have a charming voice, child. Who taught you to sing?" asked the young lady, kindly.

"My mother. She is dead now; but I do not forget," answered Tessa, in her pretty broken English.

"I wish she could sing at our tree, since Bella is ill," cried one of the children, peeping through the banisters.

"She is not fair enough for the angel and too large to go up in the tree. But she sings sweetly and looks as if she would like to see a tree," said the young lady.

"Oh, so much!" exclaimed Tessa, adding eagerly, "My sister Ranza is small and pretty as a baby angel. She could sit up in the fine tree, and I could sing for her from under the table."

"Sit down and warm yourself, and tell me about Ranza," said the kind elder sister, who liked the confiding little girl, in spite of her shabby clothes.

So Tessa sat down and dried the big boots over the furnace and told her story, while Tommo stood modestly in the background and the children listened with faces full of interest.

"O Rose! Let us see the little girl; and if she will do, let us have her, and Tessa can learn our song, and it will be splendid!" cried the biggest boy, who sat astride a chair and stared at the harp with round eyes.

"I'll ask mamma," said Rose; and away she went into the dining room close by. As the door opened, Tessa saw what looked to her like a fairy feast — all silver mugs and flowery plates and oranges and nuts and rosy wine in tall glass pitchers and smoking dishes that smelt so deliciously she could not restrain a little sniff of satisfaction.

"Are you hungry?" asked the boy, in a grand tone.

"Yes, sir," meekly answered Tessa.

"I say, mamma; she wants something to eat. Can I give her an orange?" called the boy, prancing away into the splendid room, quite like a fairy prince, Tessa thought.

A plump, motherly lady came out and looked at Tessa, asked a few questions, and then told her to come to-morrow with Ranza, and they would see what could be done. Tessa clapped her hands for joy — she didn't mind the chilblains now — and Tommo played a lively march, he was so pleased.

"Will you come, too, and bring your harp? You

shall be paid and shall have something from the tree, likewise," said the motherly lady, who liked what Tessa gratefully told about his kindness to her.

"Ah, yes; I shall come with much gladness, and play as never in my life before," cried Tommo, with a flourish of the old cap that made the children laugh.

"Give these to your brothers," said the fairy prince, stuffing nuts and oranges into Tessa's hands.

"And these to the little girl," added one of the young princesses, flying out of the dining room with cakes and rosy apples for Ranza.

Tessa didn't know what to say; but her eyes were full, and she just took the mother's white hand in both her little grimy ones and kissed it many times in her pretty Italian fashion. The lady understood her and stroked her cheek softly, saying to her elder daughter, "We must take care of this good little creature. Freddy, bring me your mittens; these poor hands must be covered. Alice, get your play hood; this handkerchief is all wet. And Maud, bring the old chinchilla tippet."

The children ran, and in a minute there were lovely blue mittens on the red hands, a warm hood over the black braids, and a soft "pussy" round the sore throat.

"Ah! So kind, so very kind! I have no way to say 'thank you'; but Ranza shall be for you a heavenly angel, and I will sing my heart out for your tree!" cried Tessa, folding the mittens as if she would say a prayer of thankfulness if she knew how.

Then they went away, and the pretty children called after them, "Come again, Tessa! Come again, Tommo!" Now the rain didn't seem dismal, the wind cold, or the way long, as they bought their gifts and hurried home, for kind words and the sweet magic of charity had changed all the world to them.

I think the good spirits who fly about on Christmas Eve, to help the loving fillers of little stockings, smiled very mildly on Tessa as she brooded joyfully over the small store of presents that seemed so magnificent to her. All the goodies were divided evenly into three parts and stowed away in father's three big socks, which hung against the curtain. With her three dollars, she had bought a pair of shoes for Nono, a knit cap for Sep, and a pair of white stockings for Ranza; to her she also gave the new hood; to Nono the mittens; and to Sep the tippet.

"Now the dear boys can go out, and my Ranza will be ready for the lady to see, in her nice new things," said Tessa, quite sighing with pleasure to

see how well the gifts looked pinned up beside the bulging socks, which wouldn't hold them all. The little mother kept nothing for herself but the pleasure of giving everything away; yet, I think, she was both richer and happier than if she had kept them all. Her father laughed as he had not done since the mother died, when he saw how comically the old curtain had broken out into boots and hoods, stockings and tippets.

"I wish I had a gold gown and a silver hat for thee, my Tessa, thou art so good. May the saints bless and keep thee always!" said Peter Benari tenderly, as he held his little daughter close, and gave her the good-night kiss.

Tessa felt very rich as she crept under the faded counterpane, feeling as if she had received a lovely gift, and fell happily asleep with chubby Ranza in her arms and the two rough black heads peeping out at the foot of the bed. She dreamed wonderful dreams that night and woke in the morning to find real wonders before her eyes. She got up early, to see if the socks were all right, and there she found the most astonishing sight. Four socks, instead of three, and by the fourth, pinned out quite elegantly, was a little dress, evidently meant for her — a warm, woollen dress, all made, and actually with

bright buttons on it. It nearly took her breath away; so did the new boots on the floor and the funny long stocking like a gray sausage, with a wooden doll staring out at the top, as if she said, politely, "A Merry Christmas, ma'am!" Tessa screamed and danced in her delight, and up tumbled all the children to scream and dance with her, making a regular carnival on a small scale. Everybody hugged and kissed everybody else, offered sucks of orange, bites of cake, and exchanges of candy; every one tried on the new things and pranced about in them like a flock of peacocks. Ranza skipped to and fro airily, dressed in her white socks and the red hood; the boys promenaded in their little shirts, one with his creaking new shoes and mittens, the other in his gay cap and fine tippet; and Tessa put her dress straight on, feeling that her father's "gold gown" was not all a joke. In her long stocking she found all sorts of treasures; for Tommo had stuffed it full of queer things, and his mother had made gingerbread into every imaginable shape, from fat pigs to full omnibuses.

Dear me! What happy little souls they were that morning, and when they were quiet again, how like a fairy tale did Tessa's story sound to them! Ranza was quite ready to be an angel; and the boys

promised to be marvellously good, if they were only allowed to see the tree at the "palace", as they called the great house.

Little Ranza was accepted with delight by the kind lady and her children, and Tessa learned the song quite easily. The boys *were* asked; and after a happy day, the young Italians all returned, to play their parts at the fine Christmas party. Mamma and Miss Rose drilled them all; and when the folding doors flew open, one rapturous "Oh!" arose from the crowd of children gathered at the festival. I assure you, it was splendid; the great tree glittering with lights and gifts; and on her invisible perch, up among the green boughs, sat the little golden-haired angel, all in white, with downy wings, a shining crown on her head, and the most serene satisfaction in her blue eyes, as she stretched her chubby arms to those below and smiled her baby smile at them. Before any one could speak, a voice, as fresh and sweet as a lark's, sang the Christmas Carol so blithely, that every one stood still to hear and then clapped till the little angel shook on her perch, and cried out, "Be 'till, or me'll fall!" How they laughed at that, and what fun they had talking to Ranza, while Miss Rose stripped the tree, for the angel could not resist temptation and amused her-

self by eating all the bonbons she could reach, till she was taken down, to dance about like a fairy in a white frock and red shoes. Tessa and her friends had many presents; the boys were perfect lambs; Tommo played for the little folks to dance; and every one said something friendly to the strangers, so that they did not feel shy, in spite of shabby clothes. It was a happy night, and all their lives they remembered it as something too beautiful and bright to be quite true. Before they went home, the kind mamma told Tessa she would be her friend and gave her a motherly kiss, which warmed the child's heart and seemed to set a seal upon that promise. It was faithfully kept, for the rich lady had been touched by Tessa's patient struggles and sacrifices; and for many years, thanks to her benevolence, there was no end to Tessa's Surprises.

MY BOYS

FEELING that I have been unusually fortunate in my knowledge of a choice and pleasing variety of this least appreciated portion of the human race, I have a fancy to record some of my experiences, hoping that it may awaken an interest in other minds and cause other people to cultivate the delightful, but too often neglected boys, who now run to waste, so to speak. . . .

The best and dearest of all my flock of boys was my Polish boy, Ladislas Wisniewski — two hiccoughs and a sneeze will give you the name perfectly. Six years ago, as I went down to my early breakfast at our Pension in Vevey, I saw that a stranger had arrived. He was a tall youth, of eighteen or twenty, with a thin, intelligent face and the charmingly polite manners of a foreigner. As the other boarders came in, one by one, they left the door open, and a draught of cold autumn air blew in from the stone corridor, making the newcomer cough, shiver, and cast wistful glances toward the warm corner by the stove. My place was

there, and the heat often oppressed me, so I was glad of an opportunity to move.

A word to Madame Vodoz effected the change; and at dinner I was rewarded by a grateful smile from the poor fellow, as he nestled into his warm seat, after a pause of surprise and a flush of pleasure at the small kindness from a stranger. We were too far apart to talk much, but as he filled his glass, the Pole bowed to me, and said low in French:

"I drink the good health to Mademoiselle."

I returned the wish, but he shook his head with a sudden shadow on his face, as if the words meant more than mere compliment to him.

"That boy is sick and needs care. I must see to him," said I to myself, as I met him in the afternoon and observed the military look of his blue and white suit, as he touched his cap and smiled pleasantly. I have a weakness for brave boys in blue, and having discovered that he had been in the late Polish Revolution, my heart warmed to him at once.

That evening he came to me in the salon and expressed his thanks in the prettiest broken English I ever heard. So simple, frank, and grateful was he that a few words of interest won his little story from him, and in half an hour we were friends. With

his fellow students he had fought through the last outbreak, had suffered imprisonment and hardship rather than submit, had lost many friends, his fortune, and his health, and at twenty, lonely, poor, and ill, was trying bravely to cure the malady which seemed fatal.

"If I recover myself of this affair in the chest, I teach the music to acquire my bread in this so hospitable country. At Paris, my friends, all two, find a refuge, and I go to them in spring if I die not here. Yes, it is solitary, and my memories are not gay, but I have my work, and the good God remains always to me, so I content myself with much hope, and I wait."

Such genuine piety and courage increased my respect and regard immensely, and a few minutes later he added to both by one of the little acts that show character better than words.

He told me about the massacre, when five hundred Poles were shot down by Cossacks in the market place, merely because they sung their national hymn.

"Play me that forbidden air," I said, wishing to judge of his skill, for I had heard him practising softly in the afternoon.

He rose willingly, then glanced about the room

and gave a little shrug which made me ask what he wanted.

"I look to see if the Baron is here. He is Russian, and to him my national air will not be pleasing."

"Then play it. He dare not forbid it here, and I should rather enjoy that little insult to your bitter enemy," said I, feeling very indignant with every thing Russian just then.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, it is true we are enemies, but

we are also gentlemen," returned the boy, proving that *he* at least was one.

I thanked him for his lesson in politeness, and as the Baron was not there, he played the beautiful hymn, singing it enthusiastically in spite of the danger to his weak lungs. A true musician evidently, for as he sung, his pale face glowed, his eyes shone, and his lost vigor seemed restored to him.

From that evening we were fast friends; for the memory of certain dear lads at home made my heart open to this lonely boy, who gave me in return the most grateful affection and service. He begged me to call him "Varjo", as his mother did. He constituted himself my escort, errand boy, French teacher, and private musician, making those weeks infinitely pleasant by his winning ways, his charming little confidences, and faithful friendship.

We had much fun over our lessons, for I helped him with his English. With a great interest in free America and an intense longing to hear about our war, the barrier of an unknown tongue did not long stand between us. Beginning with my bad French and his broken English, we got on capitally; but he outdid me entirely, making astonishing progress, though he often slapped his forehead with the despairing exclamation:

"I am imbecile! I never can will shall to have learn this beast of English!"

But he did, and in a month had added a new language to the five he already possessed.

His music was the delight of the house, and he often gave us little concerts with the help of Madame Teiblin, a German St. Cecilia, with a cropped head and a gentlemanly sack, cravat, and collar. Both were enthusiasts, and the longer they played, the more inspired they got. The piano vibrated; the stools creaked; the candles danced in their sockets; and every one sat mute while the four white hands chased one another up and down the keys, and the two fine faces beamed with such ecstasy that we almost expected to see instrument and performers disappear in a musical whirlwind.

Lake Leman will never seem so lovely again as when Laddie and I roamed about its shores, floated on its bosom, or laid splendid plans for the future in the sunny garden of the old chateau. I tried it again last year, but the charm was gone, for I missed my boy with his fun, his music, and the frank, fresh affection he gave his "little mamma", as he insisted on calling the lofty spinster who loved him like half a dozen grandmothers rolled into one.

December roses blossomed in the gardens then,

and Laddie never failed to have a posy ready for me at dinner. Few evenings passed without "confidences" in my corner of the salon, and I still have a pile of merry little notes which I used to find tucked under my door. He called them chapters of a great history we were to write together, and being a "*polisson*" he illustrated it with droll pictures and a funny mixture of French and English romance.

It was very pleasant, but like all pleasant things in this world of change, it soon came to an end. When I left for Italy, we jokingly agreed to meet in Paris the next May, but neither really felt that we should ever meet again, for Laddie hardly expected to outlive the winter, and I felt sure I should soon be forgotten. As he kissed my hand, there were tears in my boy's eyes and a choke in the voice that tried to say cheerfully:

"*Bon voyage*, dear and good little mamma. I do not say adieu, but *au revoir*."

Then the carriage rolled away; the wistful face vanished; and nothing remained to me but the memory of Laddie and a little stain on my glove where a drop had fallen.

As I drew near Paris six months later and found myself wishing that I might meet Varjo in the great,

gay city and wondering if there was any chance of my doing it, I never dreamed of seeing him so soon; but as I made my way among the crowd of passengers that poured through the station, feeling tired, bewildered, and homesick, I suddenly saw a blue and white cap wave wildly in the air; then Laddie's beaming face appeared, and Laddie's eager hands grasped mine so cordially that I began to laugh at once and felt that Paris was almost as good as home.

"Aha! Behold the little mamma, who did not thought to see again her bad son! Yes, I am greatly glad that I make the fine surprise for you as you come all weary to this place of noise. Give to me the billets, for I am still Mademoiselle's servant and go to find the coffers."

He got my trunks, put me into a carriage, and as we rolled merrily away, I asked how he chanced to meet me so unexpectedly. Knowing where I intended to stay, he had called occasionally till I notified Madame D. of the day and hour of my arrival, and then he had come to "make the fine surprise." He enjoyed the joke like a true boy, and I was glad to see how well he looked and how gay he seemed.

"You are better?" I said.

"I truly hope so. The winter was good to me and I cough less. It is a small hope, but I do not enlarge

my fear by a sad face. I yet work and save a little purse, so that I may not be a heaviness to those who have the charity to finish me if I fall back and yet die."

I would not hear of that and told him he looked as well and happy as if he had found a fortune.

He laughed, and answered with his fine bow, "I have. Behold, you come to make the fête for me. I find also here my friends, Joseph and Napoleon. Poor as mouses of the church, as you say, but brave boys, and we work together with much gayety."

When I asked if he had leisure to be my guide about Paris, for my time was short and I wanted to see *everything*, he pranced and told me he had promised himself a holiday and had planned many excursions the most wonderful, charming, and gay. Then, having settled me at Madame's, he went blithely away to what I afterward discovered were very poor lodgings, across the river.

Next day began the pleasantest fortnight in all my year of travel. Laddie appeared early, elegant to behold in a new hat and buff gloves, and was immensely amused because the servant informed me that my big son had arrived.

I believe the first thing a woman does in Paris is to buy a new bonnet. I did, or rather stood by and

let "my son" do it in the best of French, only whispering when he proposed gorgeous *chapeaux* full of flowers and feathers, that I could not afford it.

"Ah! We must make our economies, must we? See, then, this modest, pearl-colored one, with the crêpe rose. Yes, we will have that and be most elegant for the Sunday promenade."

I fear I should have bought a pea-green hat with a yellow plume if he had urged it, so wheedlesome and droll were his ways and words. His good taste saved me, however, and the modest one was sent home for the morrow, when we were to meet Joseph and Napoleon and go to the concert in the Tuileries garden.

Then we set off on our day of sight-seeing, and Laddie proved himself an excellent guide. We had a charming trip about the enchanted city, a gay lunch at a café, and a first brief glimpse of the Louvre. At dinner time I found a posy at my place; and afterward Laddie came and spent the evening in my little salon, playing to me and having what he called "babblings and pleasantries." I found that he was translating "Vanity Fair" into Polish, and intended to sell it at home. He convulsed me with his struggles to put cockney English and slang into good Polish, for he had saved up a list of

words for me to explain to him. Haystack and bean pot were among them, I remember; and when he had mastered the meanings, he fell upon the sofa exhausted.

Other days like this followed, and we led a happy life together, for my twelve years' seniority made our adventures quite proper, and I fearlessly went anywhere on the arm of my big "son". Not to theatres or balls, however, for heated rooms were bad for Laddie, but pleasant trips out of the city in the bright spring weather, quiet strolls in the gardens, moonlight concerts in the Champs Elysées; or best of all, long talks with music in the little red salon, with the gas turned low, and the ever changing scenes of the Rue de Rivoli under the balcony.

Never were pleasures more cheaply purchased or more thoroughly enjoyed, for our hearts were as light as our purses, and our "little economies" gave zest to our amusements.

Joseph and Napoleon sometimes joined us, and I felt in my element with the three invalid soldier boys, for Napoleon still limped with a wound received in the war; Joseph had never recovered from his two years' imprisonment in an Austrian dungeon; and Laddie's loyalty might yet cost him his life.

Thanks to them, I discovered a joke played upon me by my "*polisson.*" He told me to call him "ma drogha", saying it meant "my friend", in Polish. I innocently did so, and he seemed to find great pleasure in it, for his eyes always laughed when I said it. Using it one day before the other lads, I saw a queer twinkle in their eyes and, suspecting mischief, demanded the real meaning of the words. Laddie tried to silence them, but the joke was too good to keep, and I found to my dismay that I had been calling him "my darling" in the tenderest manner.

How the three rascals shouted, and what a vain struggle it was to try to preserve my dignity when Laddie clasped his hands and begged pardon, explaining that jokes were necessary to his health, and he never meant me to know the full baseness of this "pleasantrie"! I revenged myself by giving him some bad English for his translation and telling him of it just as I left Paris.

It was not all fun with my boy, however; he had his troubles, and in spite of his cheerfulness he knew what heartache was. Walking in the quaint garden of the Luxembourg one day, he confided to me the little romance of his life — a very touching little romance as he told it, with eloquent eyes and voice

and frequent pauses for breath. I cannot give his words, but the simple facts were these.

He had grown up with a pretty cousin and at eighteen was desperately in love with her. She returned his affection, but they could not be happy, for her father wished her to marry a richer man. In Poland, to marry without the consent of parents is to incur lasting disgrace; so Leonore obeyed, and the young pair parted. This had been a heavy sorrow to Laddie, and he rushed into the war hoping to end his trouble.

"Do you ever hear from your cousin?" I asked, as he walked beside me, looking sadly down the green aisles where kings and queens had loved and parted years ago.

"I only know that she suffers still, for she remembers. Her husband submits to the Russians, and I despise him as I have no English to tell"; and he clenched his hands with the flash of the eye and sudden kindling of the whole face that made him handsome.

He showed me a faded little picture, and when I tried to comfort him, he laid his head down on the pedestal of one of the marble queens who guard the walk, as if he never cared to lift it up again.

But he was all right in a minute and bravely

put away his sorrow with the little picture. He never spoke of it again, and I saw no more shadows on his face till we came to say good-by.

"You have been so kind to me; I wish I had something beautiful to give you, Laddie," I said, feeling that it would be hard to get on without my boy.

"This time it is for always; so as a parting souvenir, give to me the sweet English good-by."

As he said this, with a despairing sort of look, as if he could not spare even so humble a friend as myself, my heart was quite rent within me, and regardless of several prim English ladies, I drew down his tall head and kissed him tenderly, feeling that in this world there were no more meetings for us. Then I ran away and buried myself in an empty railway carriage, hugging the little cologne bottle he had given me.

He promised to write, and for five years he has kept his word, sending me from Paris and Poland cheery, bright letters in English, at my desire, so that he might not forget. Here is one as a specimen.

"My Dear and Good Friend, — What do you think of me that I do not write so long time? Excuse me, my good mamma, for I was so busy in these

days I could not do this pleasant thing. I write English without the fear that you laugh at it, because I know it is more agreeable to read the own language, and I think you are not excepted of this rule. It is good of me, for the expressions of love and regard, made with faults, take the funny appearance; they are *ridicule*, and instead to go to the heart, they make the laugh. Never mind, I do it.

"You cannot imagine yourself how *stupide* is Paris when you are gone. I fly to my work, and make no more fêtes — it is too sad alone. I tie myself to my table and my Vanity (not of mine, for I am not vain, am I?). I wish some chapters to finish themselfs *vite*, that I send them to Pologne and know the end. I have a little question to ask you (of a Vanity as always). I cannot translate this, no one of the *dictionnaires* makes me the words, and I think it is *jàrgon de prison*, this little period. Behold: —

> 'Mopy, is that your snum?'
> 'Nubble your dad and gully the dog,' &c.

"So funny things I cannot explain myself, so I send to you, and you reply sooner than without it, for you have so kind interest in my work you do not stay to wait. So this is a little hook for you to make

you write some words to your son who likes it so much and is fond of you.

"My doctor tells me my lungs are soon to be re-established; so you may imagine yourself how glad I am, and of more courage in my future. You may one day see your Varjo in Amerique, if I study commerce as I wish. So then the last time of seeing ourselves is *not* the last. Is that to please you? I suppose the grand *histoire* is finished, *n'est-ce pas?* You will then send it to me care of M. Gryhomski Austriche, and he will give to me in clandestine way at Varsovie, otherwise it will be confiscated at the frontier by the stupide Russians.

"Now we are dispersed in two sides of world far apart, for soon I go home to Pologne and am no more *juif errant*. It is now time I work at my life in some useful way, and I do it.

"As I am your *grand fils*, it is proper that I make you my compliment of happy Christmas and New Year, is it not? I wish for you so many as they may fulfil long human life. May this year bring you more and more good hearts to love you (the only real happiness in the hard life), and may I be as now, yours for always,

"VARJO."

A year ago he sent me his photograph and a few lines. I acknowledged the receipt of it, but since then not a word has come, and I begin to fear that my boy is dead. Others have appeared to take his place, but they don't suit, and I keep his corner always ready for him if he lives. If he is dead, I am glad to have known so sweet and brave a character, for it does one good to see even as short-lived and obscure a hero as my Polish boy, whose dead December rose embalms for me the memory of Varjo, the last and dearest of my boys.

It is hardly necessary to add, for the satisfaction of inquisitive little women, that Laddie was the original of Laurie, as far as a pale pen-and-ink sketch could embody a living, loving boy.

A HAPPY BIRTHDAY

A CERTAIN fine old lady was seventy-three on the eighth of October. The day was always celebrated with splendor by her children and grandchildren; but on this occasion they felt that something unusually interesting and festive should be done, because grandma had lately been so very ill that no one thought she would ever see another birthday. It pleased God to spare her, however, and here she was, almost as well and gay as ever.

Some families do not celebrate these days and so miss a great deal of pleasure, I think. But the people of whom I write always made a great deal of such occasions and often got up very funny amusements, as you will see.

As grandma was not very strong, some quiet fun must be devised this time and the surprises sprinkled along through the day, lest they should be too much for her if they all burst upon her at once.

The morning was fine and clear, and the first thing that happened was the appearance of two little ghosts, "all in white", who came prancing

into the old lady's room, while she lay placidly watching the sun rise and thinking of the many years she had seen.

"A happy birthday, gramma!" cried the little ghosts, scrambling up to kiss the smiling old face in the ruffled nightcap.

There was a great laughing, and cuddling, and nestling among the pillows, before the small arms and legs subsided and two round, rosy faces appeared, listening attentively to the stories grandma told them till it was time to dress.

Now you must know that there were only two grandchildren in this family, but they were equal to half a dozen, being lively, droll little chaps, full of all manner of pranks and considered by their relatives the *most* remarkable boys alive.

These two fellows were quite bursting with the great secrets of the day and had to rush out as soon as breakfast was done, in order to keep from "letting the cat out of the bag."

A fine dinner was cooked, and grandma's favorite niece came to eat it with her, bringing a bag full of goodies and a heart full of love and kind wishes to the old lady.

All the afternoon friends and presents kept coming, and Madam, in her best gown and most impos-

ing cap, sat in state to receive them. A poet came with some lovely flowers; the doctor brought a fine picture; one neighbor sent her a basket of grapes; another took her for a drive; and some poor children, whom grandma had clothed and helped, sent her some nuts they had picked all themselves, while their grateful mother brought a bottle of cream and a dozen eggs.

It was very pleasant, and the bright autumn day was a little harvest time for the old lady, who had sowed love and charity broadcast with no thought of any reward.

The tea table was ornamented with a splendid cake, white as snow outside but rich and plummy inside, with a gay posy stuck atop of the little Mont Blanc. Mrs. Trot, the housekeeper, made and presented it, and it was so pretty all voted not to cut it until evening, for the table was full of other good things.

Grandma's tea was extra strong and tasted unusually nice with Mrs. Hosy's rich cream in it. She felt that she needed this refreshment to prepare her for the grand surprise to come; for the family gifts were not yet given.

The boys vanished directly after tea and shouts of laughter were heard from Aunt Tribulation's

room. What larks as they had up there no one knew, but every one was sure they were preparing some fun in honor of the occasion.

Grandma was not allowed to go into the study, and much tacking and rummaging went on for a time. Then all the lamps were collected there, leaving grandma and grandpa to sit in the parlor, talking tenderly together by the soft glimmer of firelight, as they used to do forty years ago.

Presently something scarlet and gold, feathery and strange, flitted by the door and vanished in the study. Queer little yells and the sound of dancing feet were heard. Then there was a hunt for the cat; next, Mrs. Trot was called from the kitchen; and all but the boys came to escort grandma to the scene of glory.

Leaning on grandpa's arm, she marched first; then came Mrs. Coobiddy, the mother of the boys, bearing Aunt Carmine's picture, for this auntie was over the water and could not come.

Aunt Trib followed, escorted by Thomas Pib, the great cat, with his best red bow on. Mrs. Trot and Belinda, the little maid, brought up the rear. A music box in the hall played the "Grand March" from "Norma"; and with great dignity, all filed into the study to behold an imposing spectacle.

A fire burned brightly on the hearth, making the old-fashioned andirons shine like gold. All the lamps illuminated the room, which was trimmed with scarlet and yellow leaves. An arch of red woodbine, evergreen, and ferns from the White Mountains was made over the recess which held the journals, letters, and books of the family; for their name was Penn, and they all wrote so much that blots were found everywhere about the house and a flock of geese lived in the back yard, all ready to have their quills tweaked out at a minute's notice.

Before this recess stood a great armchair, in which the father of grandma had been laid, a newborn baby, and nearly smothered by being sat upon by the fat nurse. This thrilling fact gave it a peculiar interest to the boys, for if great-grandpa had been smashed, where would they have been?

In front of this ancient seat stood a round table loaded with gifts, and on each side stood an Indian chief in full costume, bearing lighted Chinese lanterns on the ends of their spears and war clubs on their shoulders.

The arranging of these costumes had caused much labor and fun; for these splendid crowns, a foot high, were made of hens' feathers, carefully collected and sewed on to paper by Aunt Trib; the red

shirts were fringed and bedecked with odd devices; leather leggings went above the warriors' knees, and all the family breastpins were stuck about them.

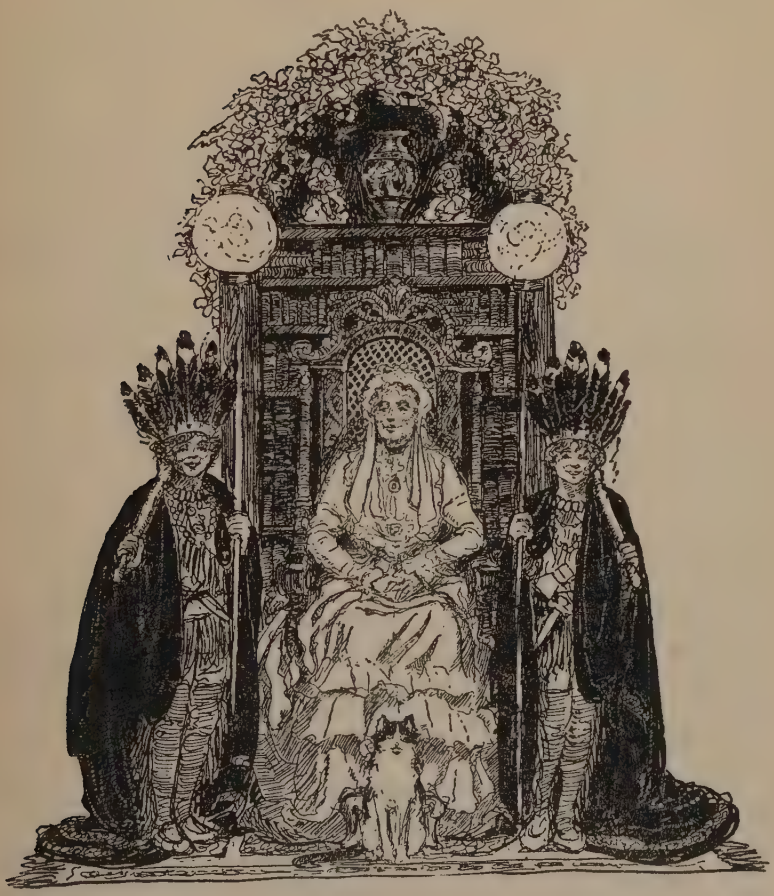
Daggers, hatchets, clubs, and spears were made by the lads themselves, and red army blankets hung gracefully from their shoulders. They had planned to paint their faces blue and red, like the Feejee Islanders at Barnum's show, but Mrs. Coobiddy would not consent to have her handsome boys disfigure themselves; so the only paint they wore was nature's red in their cheeks and heaven's blue in their eyes, as they stood by grandma's throne, smiling, like a pair of very mild and happy little chiefs.

It really was a fine sight, I assure you, and grandma was quite overcome by the spectacle. So she was introduced to her gifts as quickly as possible, to divert her mind from the tender thought that all these fond and foolish adornments were to please her.

Every gift had a poem attached, and as the presents were of every description, the verses possessed an agreeable variety. Here are a few as a sample. A small tea kettle was one gift, and this pleasing verse seemed to be bubbling out of its spout:

"A little kettle, fat and fair,
To sit on grandma's stove,

To simmer softly, and to sing
A song of Freddie's love."



Another was this brief warning tucked into a match box:

"On this you scratch
Your little match.
When the spark flies,
Look out for your eyes!
When the lucifer goes,
Look out for your nose!
Little Jack gives you this
With a birthday kiss."

A third was rather sentimental, from Mrs. Coobiddy:

"Within doth lie
A silken tie,
Your dress to deck;
Soft and warm
As daughter's arm
Round mother's neck."

Mr. Pib presented a mousetrap all set; and in order to explain his poem, I must relate an incident in his varied career.

Pib had long been one of the family and was much respected and beloved by them all. In fact, he was so petted and stuffed that he grew as fat and big as a small dog and so clumsy that he could no longer catch the mice which dodged about among the dishes in the kitchen closets.

In vain had Mrs. Trot shut him up there; in vain had Aunt Trib told him it was his duty to clear the cupboards of such small deer. Poor fat Pib only bounced about, broke the china, rattled down the pans, to come out with empty paws, while the saucy mice squeaked scornfully and pranced about under his very nose.

One day Trib saw Pib catch a squirrel, and having eaten it he brought the tail to her as a trophy of his skill. This displeased his mistress, and she gave him away, after a good scolding for killing squirrels and letting mice, his lawful prey, go free.

Pib was so depressed that he went into the bag without a mew or a scratch and was borne away to his new home in another part of the town.

But he had no intention of staying, and after a day under the sofa, passed in deep thought and without food or drink, he made up his mind to go home. Slipping out, he travelled all night, and appeared next morning, joyfully waving his tail, and purring like a small organ.

Aunt Trib was glad to see him, and when he had explained that he really did do his best about the mice, she forgave him and got the trap for him to give grandma, that she might no longer be annoyed by having her private stores nibbled at.

"Dear madam, with respect
My offering I bring;
The hooks all baited well,
And ready for a spring.
No more the cunning mice
Your biscuits shall abuse,
Nor put their babes to sleep
Within your fur-lined shoes.
The trap my work must do;
Forgive your portly cat,
For he, like you, has grown
For lively work too fat.
All larger, fiercer game
I gallantly defy,
And squirrel, rat, and mole
Beneath my paw shall die.
So, with this solemn vow,
T. Pib his gift presents,
And sprawling at your feet
Purrs forth his compliments.

Which he actually did, and then sat bolt upright on the rug, surveying the scene with the dignity of a judge and the gravity of an owl!

Such funny presents! A wood box and a water-carrier, a blue-and-gold gruel bowl and a black silk apron, a new diary and a pound of remarkably choice tea, a pretty letter on birch bark, sealed with

a tiny red leaf, and a bust of the wisest man in America, were some of them.

How the dear old lady did enjoy it all, and how grateful she was for the smallest trifle! An old friend sent her a lock of her mother's hair, and the sight of the little brown curl made her forget how white her own was, as she went back to the time when she last kissed that tender little mother fifty years ago.

Fearing that tears would follow the smiles too soon, Aunt Trib announced that the famous Indian chiefs, Chingchangpopocattepattle and Pockeyhockeyclutteryar, would now give a war dance and other striking performances to represent Indian customs.

Then all sat round, and the warriors leaped into the middle of the room with a war whoop that caused Mr. Pib to leave precipitately. It was a most exciting spectacle; for after the dance came a fight, and one chief tomahawked, scalped, and buried the other in the space of two minutes.

But the ladies mourned so for the blond little Pockeyhockeyclutteryar that he had to come alive and join in a hunting expedition, during which they shot all the chairs for buffaloes and deer and came

home to roast a sofa pillow over their fire and feast thereupon with the relish of hungry hunters.

These exploits were brought to an end by the arrival of more friends, with more gifts, and the introduction of the birthday cake. This was cut by the queen of the *fête*, and the panting chiefs handed it round with much scuffling of big moccasins and tripping over disarranged blankets.

Then all filled their glasses with water and drank the toast, "Grandma, God bless her!" After which the entire company took hands and danced about the big chair, singing in chorus:

"Long may she wave, and may we all
Her dear face live to see,
As bright and well at seventy-four
As now at seventy-three."

The clock struck ten, and every one went home leaving the family to end the day as they began it, round grandma's bed, with good-night kisses and the sound of her last words in their ears:

"It has been a beautiful and happy day, my dears, and if I never see another, you may always remember that I thought this one my best and brightest birthday."